Extract

By

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BEGIN CREDITS:

EXT. REYNOLD'S EXTRACT BUILDING - DAY

An idyllic American factory. There's a huge, long lawn in front. A Reynolds Extract sign in brick with flowers/landscaping around it, sits near the entrance. We see from the number of cars in the parking lot that it's a company of about 50 - 75 employees.

INT. REYNOLD'S EXTRACT BUILDING - DAY

We are in a manufacturing area of an assembly-line production. It's a big room full of intricate machines, huge vats of different colored extract and other food flavoring products, conveyor belts, bottling machines, etc. It has a high ceiling with offices on the second floor that have big windows overlooking this manufacturing area.

We PAN up to the main office.

INSIDE THE OFFICE

JOEL REYNOLDS, head of the company, mid-thirties, is on the phone with his friend DEAN.

DEAN (v.o.)
You should come by tonight. Half price well drinks while the game's going.

JOEL
You always give me free drinks though.

DEAN (v.o.)
Oh yeah. Well come by anyway.

JOEL
Yeah?... Might as well. No action going on at my house, that's for sure.

DEAN (v.o.)
Really? The wife out of town?

JOEL
No... I just haven't been laid in a month.

DEAN (v.o.)
You guys having problems or something?

JOEL
No. This is pretty much normal these days...

As CREDITS continue, camera PULLS OUT, back down to the manufacturing area, past a big vat of orange extract, down through various stages of assembly line production, then follows several bottles of orange extract moving past

HECTOR, a Mexican immigrant employee in his thirties. The camera stops on him. Talking to Hector is STEP, a short, beady-eyed Charles-Manson-looking guy with a beard and mustache. Step is in his forties. He makes everything he says sound as macho and important as possible.

STEP
You get this job through Manpower?

HECTOR
Yeah.

STEP
I started here with Manpower too. Started out on the line just like you.
(dead-serious)
Only I did better... 40 crates a day. *

Beat. Hector is not quite sure what he's talking about. STEP continues telling his tale in such a way that the only polite reaction would be one of total amazement.

STEP (cont'd)
I'm the best sorter in here. That's why they made me full time with benefits. I'll probably be floor manager this year.

A FEW FEET AWAY we see RORY, a stocky indie-rock geek, with too many tatoos, hair shaved on the side with a ponytail, lots of bad piercings, wearing baggy shorts with lots of pockets and some kind of gothy T-shirt -- a look that ought to be out of style by now.

Rory is putting stickers on boxes with a sticker gun. He flips the sticker gun around unnecessarily between each application, adding a few unnecessary moves/motions, slapping each box when he's done, generally making the activity look like more of a skill than it actually is. He approaches Step and Hector, pulling out some fliers from his many pockets.

RORY
(hands them each a flier)
My band's playing this Friday, come check us out.

Hector looks down at the flier. It's xeroxed with fifties clip-art, cut out letters and the name of the band, "God's Cock". Hector just looks at it confused, not knowing much English, not sure what he's supposed to be doing with the flier.

AT THE END OF THE LINE, where boxes are loaded onto pallets, sits MARY, 58 years old, wearing a 15-year-old pair of acid-wash jeans, and an oversized tweety-bird T-shirt, fanny pack, and dayglow yellow triangle-shaped earrings. She's pear-shaped with short hair. She's bitter and bossy, always shaking her head at everyone. She sits on a stool with a clipboard, looks over her glasses at Hector, shaking her head. She talks to Gabriella, a Hispanic woman in her forties.

MARY
You see that... That new guy. He's holding us up. It's not my job to tell them to hold the line either.

GABRIELLA
And then Joel's gonna come yell at us, cuz <u>he's</u> not doing his job.

MARY
(folds her arms, fed up)
I'm just gonna sit here.

GABRIELLA
You're not gonna shut it off?

MARY
I'm not gonna hold the line. If they're not gonna do their job, why should I do mine.

Mary sits there, arms folded, lips pursed, refusing to pause the conveyor belt.

INT. JOEL'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Joel is still on the phone with Dean.

JOEL
If I don't get home before about 8:00, she puts on the sweatpants and once the sweatpants are on, it's over -- I get nothing.
(notices something down below)
Shit. I'm gonna have to call you back.

Joel hangs up and runs downstairs.

ON THE MANUFACTURING FLOOR:

Boxes start to accumulate and fall off the end of the line. Step sees this, runs to shut off the line, yelling at Mary.

STEP
What are you doing?!

MARY
What are YOU doing?!
(pointing at Hector)
What is he doing?

A YELLING/BICKERING MATCH breaks out between Mary, Step, Rory and Gabriella. Joel runs over, shuts off the conveyor belt.

JOEL (cont'd)
All right. Now, what's the problem?

They all erupt in more BICKERING AND FINGER POINTING.

JOEL (cont'd)
Okay! Okay, everyone settle down. Now Mary. Hector here is new okay? It's gonna take him a couple of days, maybe his English isn't so good. You gotta be patient.

STEP
That's what I was tryin' to say.

JOEL
And Step, if you wanna be Floor Manager, this is the kind of thing you're going to have to deal with.

STEP
(kiss-ass)
Exactly.

JOEL
Okay, now Step, Rory, Hector, let's get this cleaned up, and get rolling again. We can't afford to fall behind today.

Joel walks away. People resume their posts. Mary starts right back up with Gabriella.

MARY
You see that? We always get the blame.

INT. JOEL'S OFFICE - A LITTLE LATER *

Joel sits in his swivel chair, looking down at the production floor, shaking his head. BRIAN, Joel's second in command, walks in. He's a little older than Joel, neatly trimmed beard, aviator glasses, and a bit of a gut. He wears a Reynold's Extract golf shirt and Khaki pants. He walks over to the window, joins Joel, looking down at the employees. *

JOEL *
Jesus... They're like a bunch of goddamned children. *

BRIAN *
Tell me about it. Sorry I missed the drama; I was showing boy-genius down there how to back up a forklift. *

ANGLE ON Rory, driving the forklift, handing out a flier as he passes someone. *

BRIAN (CONT'D) *
That's his whole career, driving that damn forklift. You'd think he'd wanna learn how. *

JOEL *
Well, I guess he's got that band he's in too... *

BRIAN *
(disgust at the word "band") *
"Band", ugh... *
(MORE)

BRIAN (CONT'D)
I'll bet dollars to donuts he sucks at that too. Then you got ah...
(tries to remember her name but can't)
Dinkus down there...

JOEL
Who, Mary?

BRIAN
No, the other one -- what's-her-face -- she asked me -- or rather "axed" me -- for more personal days. Just like that. I told her maybe if she figures out how to fill out the time sheets correctly I'll give her more personal days...
(Off Joel's look)
Don't worry, she will never fill out her time sheets correctly.

Joel looks down at the production floor. Joel's POV:

ANGLE ON: Mary and Step bickering. Step walks off. Mary and Gabrielle shaking their heads and yapping like a couple of old hens.

JOEL (O.S.)
Look at 'em... I am so sick of baby sitting these assholes.
(looks at his watch)
I better get going...

Joel leaves in a hurry, mumbling something about "sweatpants."

INT. JOEL'S CAR - LATE AFTERNOON

Joel drives home, in a hurry, checking his dashboard clock. It's an upscale neighborhood of McMansions in a town like Lincoln Nebraska. He turns a corner, slows down suddenly when he sees something.

JOEL'S POV:

NATHAN, a middle-aged, overweight, annoying guy is going out to the street to get his mail.

JOEL
(to himself, praying)
Please go back inside... Please just turn around...Come on...don't notice me...

It's too late. Nathan turns, sees Joel's car and waves, then crosses the street to Joel's driveway and waits to talk to him.

JOEL
(to himself)
Shit!

Joel pulls into his driveway as Nathan flags him down. Joel begrudgingly rolls down the passenger side window so Nathan can talk to him.

NATHAN
Hi there Joel! Glad I caught ya...

Nathan settles in like he's going to be there a while, leaning with his arms folded, hanging inside the car, trapping Joel.

NATHAN
How've ya been? I left you a message last week. I don't know if you got it or not.

JOEL
Yeah, actually Nathan, I'm kind of in a hurry here.

NATHAN
Oh yeah? You been busy?

JOEL
Yeah, in fact...
(checks his watch)
I should go right now actually. I gotta call the office before they leave.

NATHAN
Well, real quick while I got ya here -- what're you guys doing November 17th?

JOEL
Ah, I don't ah...
(realizes his should fake it)
Actually we're going to be out of town that weekend.

NATHAN
Oh yeah? Where you going?

JOEL
Ah...

NATHAN
Oh, wait a minute -- I'm sorry, I meant the 7th. Yeah, November 7th. You'll be in town then right?

JOEL
(defeated)
Ah...Yeah.

NATHAN
Great. There's this dinner Leslie and I are going to. It's an annual thing -- we do it every year with the Rotary Club -- it's for charity. It's just a whole lot of fun, and we wanted to invite you and Suzie to be our guests at our table. It's--

JOEL
I'm sorry, I ah... I just don't think that's something we're gonna want to do.

NATHAN
Really? Why not? It's a lot of fun.

JOEL
Oh, I don't know. Suzie doesn't really like going to stuff like that--

NATHAN
Why not?

JOEL
Well, we wouldn't know anybody there. She get's kind of uncomfortable.

NATHAN
Oh no -- It's not like that. She won't be uncomfortable. I guarantee it. No, it's not like that at all. It's not formal or anything. Trust me. It's just a real loose bunch.

JOEL
I just don't...

NATHAN
I tell you what. Why don't we do this -- I'll go ahead and get tickets, since they're gonna sell out fast. You talk to Suzie. See what she says. Like I say, she won't be uncomfortable at all. Maybe I'll have Leslie give her a call -- you know how it is when the wives talk, heh heh--

Joel is about to snap.

JOEL
Um, why don't we talk about this later.
(looks at his watch)
I gotta make this call before they leave.

Joel pulls away, forcing Nathan to raise off the window sill.

JOEL (cont'd)
(calling back)
Sorry... I just gotta make this call!

INT. JOEL'S GARAGE - CONTINUOUS

Joel pulls the car in, steps out and is shocked to see Nathan right there in his garage.

NATHAN
Sorry, I almost forgot -- the tickets are forty dollars a plate. I know that's a little steep, but the food is fantastic and it's for a good cause. So that'd be eighty dollars total. There's no tax or anything.

JOEL
Ah, look Nathan, I really gotta get inside and make this call. Let's talk about this another time.

Joel has his finger on the button to shut the garage door, waiting for Nathan to get out. Nathan stops, just inside.

NATHAN
Oh, and if you need us to look out for the house or anything when you go out of town --

Joel's finger still on the garage door button.

NATHAN
Well, just let us know. Where you guys going anyway?

JOEL
(bullshitting)
Ah, just sort of a vacation. Look, I gotta run.

Joel hits the button and the door starts going down.

NATHAN
Alright then. We'll see ya.

Nathan finally steps out of the garage. Joel breaths a huge sigh of relief. Then,

ANGLE ON THE GARAGE DOOR:

As it gets halfway down, we see Nathan's legs, heading back towards the door. Nathan leans down into frame as the door goes down.

NATHAN
Oh, Joel one more thing--

Joel lets the door shut on him, and bolts into the house.

INT. JOEL'S HOUSE - EVENING

Joel walks into the living room just as his wife, SUZIE, enters from the bedroom pulling on her SWEATPANTS. A look of disappointment on Joel's face. Suzie is a decent looking woman, about Joel's age.

JOEL
Man, that Nathan won't shut up.

SUZIE
Yeah, what an asshole. I don't even go into the front yard anymore. That wife of his is even worse.

Suzie plops down on the couch looking tired and pissed off. Joel sits down next to her.

SUZIE (cont'd)
We gotta get a new pool cleaner.I don't think that asshole checked the chlorine levels again like I asked him too... *

Joel puts his arm around her, caresses her shoulder. She doesn't seem to notice as he starts getting fresh.

SUZIE (cont'd)
...and every time he is here, he goes on and on about some problem with the goddamn filter, and I have no idea what he's talking about...

Delayed reaction -- she notices Joel is getting frisky. He gets closer, starts kissing her neck. *

SUZIE (cont'd)
(uncomfortable)
Ah,...Joel?

JOEL
What?

SUZIE
I'm sorry. It's just... I'm a little tired, and, I don't know, it's the middle of the week...

JOEL
It's not the middle of the week. It's Monday. Why can't--

SUZIE
Monday?
(Freezes, suddenly realizing something)
Oh shit!

JOEL
(worried)
What?!

SUZIE
Idol!

Suzie jumps up with newfound energy, runs for the remote and turns on the TV. Joel just sits there.

Suzie plops down in a Barcalounger.

SUZIE (cont'd)
Sorry honey. Maybe this weekend.

Joel leaves the room.

INT. JOEL'S BATHROOM -- LATER

[Quick scene of Joel trying to masturbate (off screen of course), but he's too distracted by the sounds of a bad out-of-tune Idol audition blaring through the wall.] *

EXT. SCOREBOARDS SPORTS BAR -- NIGHT

Establishing shot. A sports bar that's part of a Holiday Inn.

INT. SCOREBOARDS -- CONTINUOUS

Joel sits at the bar. DEAN, the owner of the bar, late forties, and an old friend of Joel's, sits behind the bar on a stool.

JOEL
I gotta get a house with a bathroom that's doesn't share a wall with the TV.

DEAN
Why don't you do that in another bathroom. You've got three of 'em.

JOEL
It would look suspicious. We never use those other bathrooms... Maybe if I had some insulation put in...

DEAN
Insulation?... All I know is, you shouldn't move man; you've got a nice house. I mean you've got the American dream really -- you own your own company. I can't believe you used to bar back for me here, and now you've got all that.

JOEL
But what do I have really? It's a big pain in the ass.
(MORE)

JOEL (CONT'D)
I'm always working; can't stop or the whole place will fall apart. And what good does it do me anyway? I don't get laid. That stock guy with the shitty band that works for me probably gets laid more than I do.

DEAN
(trying to help)
Yeah, but he probably lives in a crappy apartment.

JOEL
Hell, I'd move into a crappy apartment if the bathroom wasn't right next to the TV.

INT. MUSIC STORE - DAY

CINDY, a girl in her early twenties, is at the counter looking at a new Gibson hollow-body electric guitar -- one of the really nice ones. The price tag says $3,950. She's beautiful and sexy and all that, but there's something vulnerable and sweet about her as well.

Two SALESMEN, typical music store employees -- long-haired, goateed, nerdy cocky guitar-hacks are giving her way too much attention. It's clear that they don't usually have women this hot in their store. They practically stumble over each other trying to help her.

SALESMAN #1
Yeah, it's expensive but it's sweet... Are you familiar with the Gibson humbucking pickups?

CINDY
No, sorry. I don't play. It's for my Dad actually -- for his fiftieth birthday. My sisters and I are all pitching in.

SALESMAN #2
Ah, that's nice... Your Dad would love these humbuckings. They really kick ass.

An annoyed MALE CUSTOMER has been waiting behind Cindy, trying to get some help, but he might as well be invisible. He tries to address Salesman #2, off to the side.

MALE CUSTOMER
Excuse me... I just have a quick question...

Salesman #2 is oblivious, never takes his eyes off Cindy.

SALESMAN #2
(oblivious)
So, what kind of music did he play?

Both Salesmen's eyes are glued to Cindy as Male Customer finally gets sick of waiting and storms off into the keyboard room.

CINDY
I think he played like, jazz or something. I'm not sure.

SALESMAN #2
Well this is an excellent jazz guitar. It's what Pat Metheny plays.

SALESMAN #1
Is your Dad into Metheny at all?

CINDY
Oh, I don't know who that is. Sorry.

SALESMAN #2
He's like, a totally kickass fusion guitarist. Are you into fusion?

CINDY
I don't really know much about it...

SALESMAN #2
I play fusion guitar so... Just curious.

CINDY
Um, do they come in any other colors?

SALESMAN #1
You mean different finishes? There's a sunburst finish we might have in stock.

SALESMAN #2
Yeah, do you wanna see it? I'll go get it.

SALESMAN #1
Or I could go. Whatever.

CINDY
Are you sure?

SALESMAN #1/SALESMAN #2
Oh totally./ No prob!/ I'll show you the case it comes with too.

The salesmen practically trip over each other, going into the back to find the other guitar.

Cindy stands there alone for a beat. She looks around. Then casually picks up the four-thousand dollar guitar and walks out the front door with it.

EXT. MUSIC STORE - CONTINUOUS ACTION

Cindy walks a few yards over to her car, a '92 Tercel, puts the guitar in the trunk, gets in and takes off.

INT. MUSIC STORE - CONTINUOUS ACTION

The two Salesmen return -- one carrying the sunburst-finish guitar and the other with the hard-shell case. They look around, notice she's gone. They stand there for a beat, disappointed, before they realize what just happened.

SALESMAN #1
Oh shit!...
(frantically looking around)
THE GIBSON!

They run out the front door, but Cindy is long gone.

INT. JOEL'S OFFICE - DAY

Joel is at his desk. Brian comes in, excited.

BRIAN
You're not gonna believe this. Remember the guy from General Mills that called a while back? Talking like he wanted to buy us out?

JOEL
I thought you said he wasn't serious; he was just sniffing around.

BRIAN
Yeah, well he's serious now. He just made an offer -- I mean a real offer this time.

JOEL
You're kidding.

BRIAN
No. It must be part of some bigger strategic move, because it's over market value I think.

JOEL
Wow...

Joel lets it sink in. He walks over to the window, looking down on the production floor.

JOEL
I could unload all this... I could probably retire...

BRIAN
I mean, yeah, there's a lot of details to work out, but this could be great. They'll be calling back next week, what should I tell them?

Joel looks down, sees Mary sitting with her arms folded, shaking her head.

JOEL
Tell 'em hell yes.

INT. MANUFACTURING FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

Mary sits with her arms folded, refusing to hold the line.

MARY
I already warned him. This is the last time. I'm just gonna sit here.

In SLOW MOTION, we see:

- The first box falls off the end of the assembly line, bottles shatter.

- Rory, carrying some boxes slips on the broken bottles of goopey extract, falls and slides into an aisle.

- A forklift stops suddenly to avoid hitting Rory, causing a huge stack of pallets to fall off.

- Quick shot of Mary shaking her head in slow-motion.

- Just as Step rounds a corner to see what's going on, the pallets land on a bunch of pipes and high-pressure valves which burst open sending a piece of shrapnel flying across the room heading straight for

- STEP'S CROTCH. The shrapnel heads straight for his genitalia, as we

CUT TO:

EXT. REYNOLD'S EXTRACT BUILDING - DAY

Step is on a stretcher being loaded into a MEDIVAC helicopter by a couple of EMS guys. Step moans in pain as Joel tries to comfort him. A small crowd of employees watch.

ANGLE ON Mary in the crowd, shaking her head.

MARY
I knew it. That's what happens when you don't pay attention.

INT. SCOREBOARDS -- LATER

Joel sits at the bar, on a cell phone. Dean sits behind the bar on a stool.

JOEL
(to the person on the phone)
Uh-huh... Alright. Let me know if you hear anything else.

He hangs up, talks to Dean.

JOEL (cont'd)
Well, he's definitely lost one of 'em. They think they might be able to re-attach the other one, but they're not sure.

DEAN
(shaking his head)
Wow...

JOEL
Yeah... I'm not sure how it happened, but we have a great safety record and we comply with all the safety codes so... it was just a freak accident. There'll be an investigation of some kind I'm sure.

DEAN
Well, you have insurance for that kind of thing, right?

JOEL
Oh yeah. Of course. In fact, he'll probably get a huge settlement.

DEAN
Yeah. I would think so. I mean, it's your balls...

Beat, as they contemplate the profundity of it.

JOEL
Boy it really makes you stop and think about how fragile we are -- especially our balls. They're just hanging there in a little sack between our legs. At any moment they could be cut off forever.

DEAN
Yeah. And your balls are really important man. Your balls are everything. What kind of life would you have with no testicles? Can you imagine that shit?

JOEL
Yeah...

Beat.

JOEL (cont'd)
You know Dean, my life wouldn't be much different than it is now actually.
(MORE)

JOEL (cont'd)
Except for once every three months when I have sex with my wife. In fact, I might even be better off...

DEAN
Wait. Three months? I thought you said it was once a month.

JOEL
I did? I must've been lying. I don't know... Maybe things'll get better when I sell the company. I'll be around more...

DEAN
Well, I hope so. That would suck... I get laid all the time.
(off Joel's reaction)
Sorry.

JOEL
Ah, it's all right...
(thinks)
Actually, it sucks.

DEAN
Yeah, sexual frustration is bad news... You know what you oughtta do?

JOEL
What?

DEAN
Get some Xanax.

JOEL
Xanax? Isn't that for anxiety?

DEAN
Yeah it is, but I find it's good for just about any phsychological problem. I mean, basically it just makes you feel good, so it sort of works for anything. I even take it when I have a cold. It's probably great for sexual frustration. Want me to get you some?

JOEL
No.

DEAN
You know what else is good?
Codeine cough syrup.

JOEL
For what?

DEAN
It's just good.

Joel looks at Dean for a beat.

JOEL (cont'd)
Are you on something now?

DEAN
No... Well, I guess I took some Vicodin this morning. But that was just 'cause I was hung-over.

EXT. PAWN SHOP - DAY

Establishing shot, a pawn shop in a strip mall. Cindy's car parked out in front.

INT. PAWN SHOP - CONTINUOUS

Cindy is at the counter, the Gibson guitar we saw earlier is in front of her. A PAWN SHOP GUY is counting out money. He pauses, looks around, then speaks sympathetically to her.

PAWN SHOP GUY
Um, you know, I'm really not supposed to say this... but since this belonged to your father, and since he passed away and all...
(quietly)
You could probably get a better deal at a music store.

CINDY
Oh, that's okay. Thanks. But I just kind of wanna get it over with, you know? It's kind of hard for me.

PAWN SHOP GUY
I understand.

He looks around to see if his boss is watching, then counts off a FEW MORE TWENTIES, feeling sorry for her.

PAWN SHOP GUY (cont'd)
Here.

INT. CINDY'S CAR - MOMENTS LATER

Cindy puts the money in her wallet, along with a driver's license.

CLOSE ON THE WALLET.

Cindy shuffles through three or four different driver's licenses. On one, her name says MISTY PATTERSON. It's a Kansas license. She takes another one out from Colorado, with the name CINDY METZLER on it and puts that in front, then puts the wallet away.

A newspaper sits on the front seat. Something grabs her attention.

ANGLE ON THE NEWSPAPER:

We see an article about Step's accident. There's a picture of Step being taken away on the stretcher.

Cindy starts reading the article, with growing interest.

CINDY'S POV:

She scans the article, zeroing in on certain words, "...potentially big settlement..." "...no testicles..." "several million dollars" then back to "no testicles" then quickly back and forth several times -- "million dollars" "no testicles" "million dollars" "no testicles"

ON CINDY'S FACE - A look of determination. She looks one more time at the name under the picture -- Don "Step" Wilkenson, then zeroes in on the words "Reynold's Extract." She starts the car and speeds away.

INT. REYNOLD'S EXTRACT BUILDING - CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY *

Joel sits with Brian. Brian has a clipboard, going over the day's business. *

BRIAN *
So obviously Step's not coming back anytime soon. I had to hire a couple temps. Is that okay? *

JOEL *
Yeah, sure. How is Step? *

BRIAN
Better. They say he's going home in a couple of days. Speaking of which, the guys at General Mills heard about this whole Step thing. They're worried. If Step decides to sue us -- beyond the insurance settlement -- it could be a serious liability. They don't want to make an offer until this thing has settled.

JOEL
Really? They think it's that big of a liability?

BRIAN
Well yeah. Don't you? I mean, think about it. Imagine if you asked a bunch of jurors how much you'd have to pay 'em to cut their balls off? I mean, I wouldn't let someone cut my balls off for a billion dollars. Seriously -- unless there were some kind of really expensive operation that could give you artificial balls or something. Would you?

JOEL
No, I guess not.

BRIAN
Anyway, I wouldn't worry. He says he's not going to sue us. Says he
(crude imitation)
"don't want somethin' fer nothin'"
and "What's right is right." If we can just get him to sign something to that effect we should be fine.

JOEL
Boy, Step sure is being mellow about all this.

BRIAN
Yeah, well I think when you lose your balls it mellows you out. You don't get as pissed off and aggressive about things. I know it's true for horses, and bulls.

JOEL
Boy, it sure does make you think..

BRIAN
Oh, by the way, guess who asked for a raise today?

JOEL
Who?

BRIAN
(gestures indiscriminately to someone downstairs)
Dinkus. Can you believe that?

JOEL
Brian, you call everyone here "Dinkus." I don't know who you're talking about.

BRIAN
You know, Forklift-Dinkus?

JOEL
Oh... I thought you call him "boy-genius."

BRIAN
Yeah, well boy-genius asked for a raise. I said, "are you kidding? You nearly got someone killed last week," and then he blamed it on Dinkus over there.

JOEL
You know Brian, you really ought to learn the employees' names.

BRIAN
Well, I was thinking about that, but hey, if this deal goes through next week, I won't have to. It's not like I'm gonna be inviting Dinkus and Boy-Genius over for dinner.

INT. JOEL'S OFFICE - NEXT DAY

Joel stands on one side of his office looking down through a long window overlooking the manufacturing area. Dean comes in, walks over to the window, looks down at the production floor with Joel.

DEAN
Hey man. What's goin' o-- Whoa!

DEAN'S POV: It's CINDY, now working down on the floor, on the assembley line.

DEAN (cont'd)
Damn! Who's she? Is she new?

JOEL
Yeah. She's a temp.

DEAN
She's a tramp?

JOEL
No a temp. Quit staring.

DEAN
Damn, she's hot! Way to go.

JOEL
Hey, I didn't hire her. She came here through Manpower, like everybody else. They just sent her over.

DEAN
Manpower, huh? Maybe I should give them a call. You don't usually have girls anywhere near that hot working here. What's the deal?

JOEL
Yeah, I know. I guess it makes sense though if you think about it. Hot girls need a job just as much as anyone else.

DEAN
(thinks for a second)
Do they really?... Huh... You just don't see 'em here. Usually your temps look like winos. And they're guys.

JOEL
You wanna hear something really weird?

DEAN
What?

JOEL
She came on to me.

DEAN
No way! Really?

JOEL
Yeah. I mean, I'm pretty sure. I could be wrong, but...

DEAN
Hey, I'm sure she did. Are you kidding? You could have any girl down there.

JOEL
I don't know about that.

DEAN
I'm serious. Dude, you're the big shot here. You're the king of... What do you call that shit you make here again?

JOEL
Extract. And spray-dried flavoring, and we're branching out into--

DEAN
Yeah, you're the Extract King man. You could have any girl here. I mean, I wouldn't want most of 'em, but her... Way to go Joel.

Dean looks down at manufacturing area, taking it all in.

DEAN (cont'd)
So how did she come on to you?

JOEL
Well, first she started asking me about what happened to Step and all that stuff -- you know, just sort of making conversation?

DEAN
Yeah.

JOEL
But it really seemed like she was flirting with me, you know?
(MORE)

JOEL (CONT'D)
Then, she just sort of asked me out... I think.

DEAN
Really? How?

JOEL
Well, you see that guy down there by the fork lift?

ANGLE ON Rory, the indi-rock guy with tattoos, etc.

JOEL (cont'd)
His band is playing somewhere, at some party this weekend, and she asked me if I wanted to go with her.

DEAN
Wow. So, you gonna do anything about it?

JOEL
What? No. No way. I couldn't live with myself if I cheated on Suzie... It'd be nice if I got laid at home once in a while though...

DEAN
(still staring at her)
Man, she is fine. You mind if I hit that then?

Beat.

JOEL
Yeah, I do sort of...

We see a COMMOTION down on the floor. Mary runs out of the Women's locker room SCREAMING AND YELLING.

INT. REYNOLD'S EXTRACT / MANUFACTURING AREA - CONTINUOUS ACTION

Mary runs over to where Hector is working, hysterical.

MARY
My purse is stolen! It's gone!
(pointing at Hector)
He did it! He stole my purse!

Brian runs over and stands between them, trying to calm Mary down, but she keeps ranting. Hector looks confused and worried.

BRIAN
Now hold on--

MARY
I won't hold on! I'll call the cops!

HECTOR
(confused, frightened)
What? I don'... No comprende...

BRIAN
(horrible spanish)
Espera un momento Hector. Tu sabes donde esta su... uh, purse?

ANGLE ON CINDY, watching the whole thing-- completely unfazed.Joel rushes in.

JOEL
Now wait a second. Calm down Mary. How do you know it was stolen?

MARY
It's gone! That's how.

JOEL
Well, what did it look like.

MARY
It was black with a fur, leopard style border...

As Mary describes the purse, we

CUT TO:

INT. CINDY'S CAR - AFTERNOON

Cindy sits in her parked car, going through the purse Mary just described. She takes some cash, puts it in her pocket, then finds what she's looking for -- the address book.

ANGLE ON ADDRESS BOOK.

Cindy turns to the Ws and finds Step Wilkenson. She notes his address. She starts the car and takes off.

EXT. STREET IN FRONT OF STEP'S HOUSE - A LITTLE LATER

Cindy sits and waits, listening to the radio. It's a very blue-collar neighborhood. She's about three houses away from Step's house, keeping an eye on it.

After a beat, Step limps out of the house, walks over to his pickup truck, painfully gets in, and leaves. Cindy starts the car and follows from a distance.

INT. GROCERY STORE - A LITTLE LATER

Step wheels his shopping cart into one of the checkout lines. He uses the cart as a crutch to help him walk. Cindy gets in line behind him. She only has one item, a bottle of Reynold's Orange Extract. Step notices her.

STEP
You can go ahead of me if that's all you have.

CINDY
(sweetly)
Thank you so much.
(holds up extract bottle)
I can't believe I'm buying this stuff -- I work at the factory.

STEP
Really? I work there too. Or, ah, I used to.

CINDY
Really? You're kidding! I just started there. What's your name?

STEP
I go by Step. Yeah, I'm the fastest sorter there...

As Cindy and Step get to know each other we

CUT TO:

INT. JOEL'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Joel enters the living room. He first sees the sweatpants, then sees Suzie is sound asleep on the couch. He sighs, then turns and leaves.

INT. SCOREBOARDS SPORTS BAR -- NIGHT

Joel sits at the bar talking to Dean. Joel is drinking some kind of hard liquor, getting a buzz.

JOEL
I'm sick of it Dean. I'm sick of being turned down in my own house by my own wife. We're turning into one of those brother-sister couples.

DEAN
Huh...Now that you mention it, you guys kind of look alike too.

JOEL
(grossed out)
No we don't!

DEAN
Okay.

JOEL
(takes a drink)
Maybe things will be better after I sell the company... Or maybe it's just going to mean more time to sit around and contemplate not getting laid.

Dean nods sympathetically.

DEAN
What about that girl at work? She still into you?

JOEL
Yeah... she was really coming on to me. She gave me her phone number and everything. Told me to call her if I wanted to go to that party. Can you believe that? And there's nothing I can do about it, but just be sexually frustrated.

DEAN
I've got some Xanax if you want it. Like I say, that always works for me.

JOEL
No thanks...

DEAN
Well maybe you should call that girl.

JOEL
No, I can't. I can't cheat on Suzie. I just gotta power through it until I'm so old that I can't get it up anymore.

DEAN
What about if Suzie cheated on you?

JOEL
Hmm... I hadn't even thought of that...
(beat)
I wish she would.

DEAN
You wish she would cheat on you? Wouldn't that bother you?

Joel thinks about it.

JOEL
No. I don't think it would actually.
(occuring to him)
I guess that's weird huh?

DEAN
Yeah, it's a little weird. Sort of.

JOEL
But see, then I could do something about all this sexual frustration, without feeling guilty about it.

DEAN
Do you think she would cheat on you?

JOEL
Nah...

DEAN
You sure?

JOEL
(considers it)
Well, I don't know. Hmm... Maybe if she were really tempted she would. Like if some really studly guy came on to her.

DEAN
So you're saying she would probably cheat on you if she was put in temptation's way?

JOEL
Yeah, maybe.

DEAN
You know what you oughtta do?

JOEL
(weary)
I don't wanna do any drugs Dean.

DEAN
No, no. Check this out -- If you really wish your wife would cheat on you, it's not that hard to make it happen.

JOEL
How?

DEAN
Hire a gigolo to have an affair with your wife.

JOEL
What?

DEAN
I'm serious. I know a guy.

JOEL
(incredulous)
You know a gigolo?

DEAN
Yeah.

JOEL
How do you know a gigolo?

DEAN
This guy Brad. He comes in here all the time. He's a friend of Vic's. You could hire him to have an affair with Suzie.

JOEL
Come on Dean.

DEAN
Why not? You said you wouldn't care if she cheated on you. Then you'd be free to go out with that Cindy chick and get your ya-yas out -- with no guilt. Problem solved.
(proud of himself)
Man, what a great idea.

Joel just shakes his head at the whole thing.

JOEL
You know, maybe I will try some of that Xanax.

Dean reaches down under the cash register and whips out a little box and pulls out a pill.

EXT. LAKE -- SAME TIME

Step's truck is parked out at a lake in the country. He and Cindy sit next to each other on the tailgate, looking at the stars, talking.

STEP
... I just believe that what's right is right.

CINDY
That's right Step, and what's right is for you to send a message.

STEP
A message?

CINDY
You need to send a message so that a horrible accident like this never happens to anyone else ever again. <u>That's</u> what's right. And the way you do that is to take them to court.

STEP
You think?

CINDY
Yes Step... That's why I called a lawyer for you -- that guy on all the bus stop benches.

STEP
Joe Adler?
(touched)
You did that for me?

CINDY
Mmm hmm... I just want you to do what's right Step.

They start cuddling, kissing. Cindy pulls away.

CINDY
I'm sorry Step, your doctor said you shouldn't get aroused.

STEP
No he didn't.

CINDY
Maybe it was your lawyer, but he talked to your doctor. And your doctor said it's very important not to get aroused until after the trial... I'm sorry.

STEP
That's okay... You're so good to me Cindy.

They start cuddling again.

CINDY
Look Step, you're getting me turned on, I'm getting you turned on... I better just go.

INT. SCOREBOARDS SPORTS BAR -- LATER

Joel is starting to look really tweaked as the drug-alcohol combination begins to kick in.

Dean is examining a pill under the cash register light, trying to read the small print. He looks concerned.

DEAN
Shit... Do you remember what color that pill I gave you was?

JOEL
Huh?

DEAN
Damn. I don't think it was Xanax. I think that might've been Ritalin... Or "Special K."

JOEL
(feeling the buzz)
Ah, who cares?

DEAN
It's just that, ah, Special K is a horse tranquilizer, kinda has a weird effect when people take it but... well, don't worry about it... You might not want to drink too much more though.

JOEL
(beginning to slur his speech)
You know that thing you were talking about? About the gigolo?

DEAN
Yeah?

JOEL
Do you think it would be wrong to do that? I mean morally wrong?

DEAN
(with full authority)
Oh nooo. Definitely not. What could be morally wrong about it?

JOEL
I don't know...

DEAN
Look, if she doesn't want to go for it, she doesn't have to. And if she does, then she's the one who sinned, and then it's perfectly morally right for you to go out and boff whoever you want.

JOEL
(slurred speech)
Yeah, I guess you're right. I can't think of anything morally wrong about it either.

Beat. *

JOEL
And this guy, he's a friend of yours? What's his name?

DEAN
Brad. You want me to give him a call?

JOEL
I don't know. It's kinda weird even talking about it.

DEAN
Look, this is no big deal Joel. I'm serious.

JOEL
Really?

DEAN
Yeah. I mean, you can't lose. Just say you're hiring him to come clean the pool or something. See what happens. If she doesn't go for it, then at least you know you're doing the right thing by being faithful.

JOEL
Yeah, I guess you're right... I don't know. It's crazy.

Dean pours Joel another drink.

DEAN
Look. Have another drink. Think about it... You know what? Why don't I just call Brad and see what he has to say?

JOEL
Alright. What the hell.

Joel takes a big swig of liquor.

INT. SCOREBOARDS SPORTS BAR - BACK OFFICE -- NIGHT

Dean and Joel are talking with BRAD, the gigolo. He's young, blonde, super good-looking, but clearly a complete airhead. Joel looks really messed up now.

JOEL
So it's two-hundred dollars then?

BRAD
Yeah, two-hundred.

DEAN
Well yeah, but don't forget, I'm getting ten percent.

JOEL
What, so you're a pimp now?

DEAN
(condescending chuckle)
I don't think they're called "pimps" when it's with male prostitutes, okay. There's some other word for it -- it's not a "john," but it's something like that. Besides, I'm the one who hooked all this up. And don't worry 'cuz it's coming out of Brad's money anyway.

JOEL
Alright, alright.
(to Brad)
So it's two-hundred dollars then?

DEAN
Two-hundred and twenty.

JOEL
Wait a minute--

BRAD
Um, I have a question?

JOEL
Yeah?

Brad looks at Joel, deeply concerned.

BRAD
So like, are you gonna, like, watch or something?

JOEL
No no no. God no! It's not like that. I won't even be there. I'll be at work. Remember? We already talked about this.

Brad looks blank, like he's not getting it.

JOEL
What you'll do, is come to my house pretending to be the new pool cleaner. Then you simply try to seduce my wife. Okay? If she doesn't respond, you simply clean the pool and leave. That's all. It's that simple.

Hold on Brad for a long beat.

BRAD
So, uh, you're not gonna touch my ass or anything...?

JOEL
NO! Try to pay attention okay? I <u>will not be there</u>. I will be at work. You come over to my house while I'm <u>not</u> <u>there</u>, posing as the new pool cleaner and then try to seduce her...

Brad finally makes a breakthrough.

BRAD
Oooh, I see. Sorry man. Yeah, yeah. I get it now. You're not even gonna be there...

JOEL
Yeah, that's right.

BRAD
Yeah... cool. No problem. This is gonna be great!

JOEL
Remember, she might not go for it--

Brad starts to get a little too excited.

BRAD
Yeah, this is gonna be cool! I can hardly wait! Awesome. Hey man, if you know anyone else who needs -- you know -- what I do, like you know, lonely housewives and shit, maybe you could tell 'em about me, you know...

Joel looks on with growing concern as Brad can't seem to stop talking.

BRAD
... Cuz like, I figure if I did a few jobs and I was, like, really good? Then maybe they'd tell their friends, you know, and they'd give me a... what do you call those things?

DEAN
Referrals.

BRAD
Yeah yeah, those things. Then those women could tell more women and then it'd be like I was, like, uh... branching or..

DEAN
Networking.

BRAD
Yeah, networking! Totally. Then if I got enough of 'em, maybe I could quit my landscaping job and do this full time. That would be awesome! Cause I hate landscaping. I like getting laid a lot better, and my boss is a total dick...

EXT. SCOREBOARDS' PARKING LOT -- NIGHT

Joel and Dean are at Dean's car, trying to say goodbye to Brad, who still won't shut up.

BRAD
Like I say, if your wife has any housewife friends who might--

Dean finally puts his foot down.

DEAN
Okay, you've said that a few times now Brad. Go on to your car. Okay?

BRAD
Alright. Cool. Like I say--

DEAN
Goodnight Brad.

BRAD
Okay. See you later.

Brad finally leaves.

DEAN
Let me drive you home. You're in no condition to drive.

Joel stumbles into Dean's car.

JOEL
Are you sure about this guy Dean? He acts like he's never done this before.

DEAN
Oh no. He does it all the time. Don't worry. He just gets a little excited sometimes. He's cool.

JOEL
I don't know. He sure doesn't seem too bright.

DEAN
Yeah well, what do you excpect? He's a whore.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. REYNOLDS EXTRACT - EMPLOYEE BREAK ROOM - NEXT MORNING

A break room with a kitchen. Joel is badly hungover. He looks like he's about to throw up as he reaches into the cupboard above the sink, downs a couple of aspirin, then drops some alka-seltzer in to a glass of water. Cindy comes in.

CINDY
Looks like you had one of those nights.
(Flirtatious)
Where was I?

Joel nods, tries to grin and look cool as he takes a sip of his alkaseltzer. Then his eyes go wide, he almost does a spit-take as something suddenly dawns on him...

JOEL
Oh shit!

He runs out of the room.

CUT TO:

INT. JOEL'S OFFICE

Joel grabs the phone and dials frantically. Dean answers.

JOEL
Dean?

DEAN (V.O.)
(waking up)
Oh, hey Joel.

JOEL
Thank God you're home. Ah,... did that really happen last night? I mean, did we go through with it -- with that gigolo stuff?

DEAN
Ah, yeah. As far as I know.

JOEL
Shit! What was I thinking?! We gotta call it off. Right now. Can you call that guy, Brad?

DEAN
Okay...

JOEL
Tell him I'll pay him anyway, whatever, just <u>don't come over</u>. God, what was I thinking?!

DEAN
Sure, I'll call him. No problem... Oh wait a second. I don't think I have his number.

JOEL
What? I thought you called him last night.

DEAN
Yeah, but I got his number from Vic.

JOEL
Well get it from him again.

DEAN
Vic doesn't have a phone right now.

JOEL
Shit! I'll try information. What's Brad's last name?

Pause.

DEAN
Hmm... it's something like,... I think it's a Mexican name.

JOEL
(losing patience)
Mexican?! The guy's got blonde hair and blue eyes!

DEAN
Yeah, I thought it was weird too -- a guy like that with a Mexican last name... It's like Lopez, or Sanchez or something.

Joel looks at his watch. It's 11:15.

JOEL
Shit!

Joel hangs up the phone, and rushes out the door.

INT. RECEPTIONIST DESK IN FRONT OF JOEL'S OFFICE -- CONTINUOUS ACTION

Brian walks in.

BRIAN
(concerned)
Joel, we gotta talk.

JOEL
Not now Brian.

BRIAN
Ah yeah, it's kind of important -- kind of <u>really</u> important. It's about Step-

Joel rushes past him.

JOEL
Not now!

We FOLLOW Joel as he rushes past his SECRETARY.

SECRETARY
Excuse me Joel? There's a Brad Chavez on line one for you.

JOEL
I can't, I--

Joel stops suddenly.

JOEL
Who?

SECRETARY
Brad Chavez. He said he's done with the job you guys talked about at your house? Do you want me to take a message?

Joel looks pale.

JOEL
Um, no... He's the ah, pool cleaner. I better take that.

Joel goes back in his office. HOLD on Brian, confused.

INT. JOEL'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Joel stares at the phone for a beat then picks it up.

JOEL
Hello?

BRAD (V.O.)
Hey, is this Joel?

JOEL
Yes.

BRAD (V.O.)
Hey, it's Brad. Mission accomplished dude.

JOEL
What do you mean?

BRAD (V.O.)
I mean it worked. She totally went for it.

JOEL
What? What're you...?
(looks at his watch)
You weren't even supposed to be there for another 45 minutes.

BRAD (V.O.)
Oh really? I forgot what time you guys said, and I was so excited about it, I just went over there.

Joel sits down, freaked out.

JOEL
(reality setting in)
So you mean she actually ah... you guys...?

BRAD (V.O.)
Yup. It was easy.

JOEL
(agitated)
Easy? What do you mean "easy"?

BRAD (V.O.)
Oh, I don't mean easy like she was easy -- like she was a slut or anything. I just mean it wasn't hard to get her to... Never mind.

JOEL
No. Tell me. Tell me how it happened.
(braces himself)
I wanna hear everything.

BRAD
You sure?

JOEL
Yeah.

BRAD (V.O.)
Okay. Well, she let me in, so I went back like I was cleaning the pool...

EXT. JOEL'S HOUSE - POOL -- DAY

As Brad's dopey narration continues, we see the story he's telling. It plays out like a bad soft-porn flick on Cinemax.

We see Brad wiping the side of the pool with a rag.

BRAD (V.O.)
...I don't know anything about pool cleaning, so I was just faking it. She was in her bathing suit...

Suzie comes out and lies on one of the reclining chairs.

BRAD (V.O.)
...So I struck up a conversation...

BRAD
This is a really nice house.

SUZIE
Thanks.

BRAD
Is it your Dad's house?

SUZIE
No. It's ours.

BRAD
Wow, you look so young to be living in a house this nice.

SUZIE
Oh, thanks.

Beat.

BRAD
Do you have any sunscreen? I forgot mine.

Brad's dopey narration comes back in...

BRAD (V.O.)
... I thought that was pretty smart of me -- to ask her to borrow sunscreen. See, 'cuz that way, once she gave me some, I could ask her if she wanted some too, and rub some on her back, instead of just coming out and asking her to rub some on her. Pretty smooth huh?...

We see Brad rubbing lotion on Suzie's back as she lies face-down on the chair.

BRAD (V.O.)
Once I was rubbing the sunscreen on her, the rest was easy...

We see Brad's hands working their way down Suzie's back. Just as they start to move down towards her butt, Joel interrupts, YANKING US OUT OF THE FLASHBACK.

JOEL
Okay that's enough! Stop!

INT. JOEL'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

JOEL
I don't need to hear anymore.

BRAD (V.O.)
Okay, cool. Hey, like I say, if you know of anyone else, or if you ever need me to do it again--

JOEL
NO! No. Look, I gotta go. Bye.

Joel hangs up the phone and falls back into his chair, in a state of shock.

JOEL
(quietly, to himself)
Holy shit.

INT. JOEL'S CAR - LATE AFTERNOON

Joel drives home from work. He still looks freaked out. He notices something ahead, and suddenly SLAMS ON THE BREAKS.

JOEL
Dammit!

JOEL'S POV: Nathan, the guy across the street is in his front yard, puttering around with the mail.

JOEL
(to himself)
No... not today...

Joel puts the car in reverse, starts to pull behind a parked car in an attempt to hide, but Nathan notices him, waves and crosses the street. Joel reluctantly pulls ahead to his driveway.

NATHAN
How's it goin'?

JOEL
Oh, I'm kind of busy actually.

NATHAN
Yeah. Well I won't keep you. I just wanted to let you know, I got those tickets to that dinner we talked about on the 7th. I think I told you they were forty dollars a piece, but it turns out it's a tad more this year -- fifty-five -- so if I could go ahead and just get a check from you guys...

JOEL
Look, ah, we can't go. Remember?

NATHAN
No, this is the 7th. You said you're going out of town on the 17th.

JOEL
Yeah, but remember, I told you we didn't really want to go to this thing.

Nathan looks dumbfounded. Joel is about to snap.

NATHAN
But I already bought the tickets. I know you said something about her feeling uncomfortable, but, like I say, she won't feel uncomfortable at all -- I guarantee it.
(MORE)

NATHAN (CONT'D)
It's just a whole lot of fun. You guys'll have a great time.

JOEL
Look, I gotta get going.

NATHAN
Alright then...

Joel starts to pull away.

NATHAN (cont'd)
Oh, one more thing --

Joel just keeps driving, almost knocking Nathan over.

INT. JOEL'S HOUSE - EVENING

Joel and Suzie are eating dinner. Suzie has a glow about her, looking better than ever -- relaxed, satisfied, etc. Joel's has a quietly pissed off demeanor. They eat in silence for a beat.

SUZIE
So... How's work?

JOEL
It sucks.

SUZIE
Really? What's wrong?

JOEL
Nothing.

Suzie looks a little puzzled. They keep eating in silence for a beat.

JOEL
I don't feel well. I'm going to bed.

INT. REYNOLD'S EXTRACT BUILDING - JOEL'S OFFICE - DAY

From the window in his office, Joel watches Cindy working down on the production floor. Cindy looks up, they make eye contact for a brief moment. She gives him a flirtacious wave. Joel waves back. Then Rory comes by, starts talking to Cindy.

INT. REYNOLD'S EXTRACT /MANUFACTURING AREA - CONTINOUS

CINDY
So you're in a band?

RORY
...Actually, I'm in five bands right now. But Godscock is basically the same four guys as Fighthead, but Fighthead's more of a thrash/skatepunk thing. Godscock is more melodic stuff.

Cindy nods politely. Rory thinks she's interested.

RORY (cont'd)
So you comin' Friday?

CINDY
Yeah, definitely.
(looks at her watch)
Ooh, I gotta go. Dentist appointment.

RORY
Cool.

Cindy leaves.

ANGLE ON Mary, on the other side of the room, watching them. She talks to Gabriella.

MARY
See, there he goes again, slowing us down.
(re: Cindy)
Now she's a good sorter. They need to hire more people like her.

GABRIELLA
She's so nice too.

Hector walks by. Mary just shakes her head.

MARY
I can't believe he's still working here. You know Silvia can't find her wallet. Thinks it was stolen. And guess who was in the locker room last? Hector.

They both look at Hector and shake their heads in disgust.

MARY
You know, I could get a job at Southwest Airlines. My Niece works there. I'd get better benefits than we get here too.

GABRIELLE
Mmm hmm. I could get a job at Gemco. You think they would put up with this stuff at Gemco? Mmm mmn. They run a tight ship.

MARY
That's right.

INT. JOEL'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Joel's POV of Mary and Gabrielle, yacking self-righteously. Joel looks on with disgust...

JOEL
(to himself)
Good riddance...

Brian steps in, taps on the door.

BRIAN
You got a second? I think we might have a big problem here. I'm not sure what happened, but all of the sudden Step says he doesn't want to settle anymore. I think he might've talked to a lawyer.

Joel goes to his desk, sits down.

BRIAN
Like I say, General Mills isn't going to make their offer official until this settles.

Joel considers this.

JOEL
I think Step is just chest-beating. He does this all the time. He gets all wound up, talks big, then he always backs down. And that's *with* his balls.

INT. PAROLE OFFICE - AFTERNOON

It's a bleak looking office with rows of cubicles. We PAN past several cubicles where hardass parole officers meet with their parolees -- various gang-bangers, drug dealers, junkies, a hideous transvestite prostitute, etc. As we pan, each officer is giving them nothing -- "this is your last chance," "You expect me to believe that?", etc. We continue past officers giving them nothing, giving them nothing, ending on a cubicle with Cindy, where a PAROLE OFFICER is giving Cindy everything -- almost apologetic.

PAROLE OFFICER
I'm sorry to even bring this up, but you're not living with the drug dealer anymore are you?

Cindy's parole officer is a sad schlub of a guy, about 50 with bushy grey hair and a mustache, he has a badge and a gun on his belt.

CINDY
Nope. I'm staying at Extended Stay until I can find a place...

She smiles, flirtatiously waves her key/card.

CINDY (CONT'D)
See?
(sincere)
I really feel like I've turned my life around. Thanks in large part to you.

PAROLE OFFICER
(almost blushing)
It's okay. I'm just glad to see you're doing so well... Ah, one more thing I just need to ask you: We had a little incident up in Templeton a couple weeks back where someone stole an expensive guitar from a music store? Someone who fit your description. You know anything about that?

CINDY
Huh? No... I was probably at work that day.

PAROLE OFFICER
Look Cindy, you realize you can't screw up anymore right? I mean, even something minor, and you could go back to jail for a while this time. I'd hate to see that happen.

CINDY
Well yeah, but why would I steal a guitar? I've got no musical talent. I'm tone deaf.

They both laugh.

PAROLE OFFICER
Heh heh, So am I. I can't carry a tune to save my life.

CINDY
Really? Wow...

Cindy acts fascinated by Parole Officer's lack of musical talent. He happily goes on about it, forgetting about the guitar...

PAROLE OFFICER
Yeah, I could barely sing the Star Spangled Banner in school...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. REYNOLD'S EXTRACT BUILDING - PARKING LOT - DAY

It's the end of the workday. People walk to their cars. Joel turns a corner and finds Cindy right in front of him.

CINDY
Hey Mr. Reynolds.

JOEL
Oh, hey Cindy. You can just call me Joel.

CINDY
(flirtatious)
Okay *Joel*. So you going to the party tonight?

JOEL
Oh yeah. Right, that's tonight...
(awkward)
(MORE)

JOEL (CONT'D)
Yeah, I was thinking about it. Are you going?

CINDY
Yeah, definitely. Maybe I'll see you there?

JOEL
Yeah, I think I'll probably go.

CINDY
Do you have the directions?

JOEL
I'm not sure...

CINDY
Here, I'll write it down just in case

Cindy opens her purse. We see at least FIVE WALLETS, SEVERAL WATCHES, JEWELRY, etc. She takes out a pen and a piece of pink, girly stationary and starts writing.

CINDY (cont'd)
I'll also put my number on here. In case you want to call me some time -- if you want.

Joel blushes awkwardly, like a junior high school kid.

JOEL
Um... Okay. Sure.

EXT. JOEL'S HOUSE - EVENING

Joel pulls into the driveway and is STARTLED as he practically runs over Nathan, flagging him down.

Joel MUTTERS obscenities as he reluctantly stops and rolls down the window.

NATHAN
Hi there. Almost missed ya.

JOEL
Hi. I can't talk right now--

NATHAN
Hey, I noticed you guys got a new pool cleaner today. How is he? We're thinking of changing services.

JOEL
Look Nathan, I gotta... Wait, you mean yesterday, don't you?

NATHAN
Huh?

JOEL
The new pool cleaner. You saw him yesterday right? Not today.

NATHAN
No. It was today. The new guy.

JOEL
What'd he look like?

NATHAN
Blonde haired kid, about this high, good looking. Real good looking. In fact--

JOEL
You sure it was today? Not yesterday?

NATHAN
Yeah.

JOEL
You're absolutely sure?

NATHAN
Yeah. I know it was today, because I came home for lunch. I was gone all day yesterday. Anyway, you think I could go ahead and get that check from ya? Like I say, it's 55 dollars a plate, so that'd be 110 total. There's no tax...

Nathan leans up to scratch his back. Joel seizes the opportunity and pulls away, burning a little rubber.

INT. JOEL'S HOUSE - BEDROOM -- MOMENTS LATER

Joel is on his cell phone, yelling in hushed tones at Brad. He has the door shut so Suzie won't hear him.

JOEL
What the hell were you doing at my house today?!

BRAD (V.O.)
Oh, umm... nothing.

JOEL
Bullshit!

BRAD (V.O.)
Look, don't worry about it bro'. I won't charge you for this one.

JOEL
Won't charge me for...? You had sex with my wife again?!

BRAD (V.O.)
Well, I figured we already did it once, so what's the big deal? I mean, she said to stop by if I was in the neighborhood, so... Besides, I'm not gonna charge you--

JOEL
Not gonna charge...? God damn you! Yes you are gonna charge me! I'm gonna pay you! You're not having sex with my wife for free! And I better not ever catch you anywhere near my house ever again!

Joel slams down the phone. Then realizes it's a cell phone, picks it back up and hits the "End" button.

INT. JOEL'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM -- NIGHT

Suzie is asleep on the couch in her sweatpants. Joel walks through, mumbles something about going to a party.

INT. JOEL'S CAR -- NIGHT

Joel pulls up to the house where the party is going on. He stays in the car, checking it out.

Scanning Joel's POV, we see the band, Godscock, playing in the backyard, with Rory on bass. They are set up on the patio of this small two-bedroom suburban house. Most of the people at the party are crowded around the keg, which is on the other side of the backyard, ignoring the band. The band sounds awful -- loud as hell, unmusical, uninspired. The lead singer sings in that awful Eddie Vedder style, but even more loud and overly dramatic. Rory acts all intense, in stark contrast to the non-intensity of the music.

They all have that baggy-shorts tattooed mid-nineties look. It's downright pathetic.

There's one drunk guy off to the side banging his head, playing air-guitar and stumbling into the bushes.

Joel spots Cindy over by the keg, drinking, mingling. He watches her for a beat, then shakes his head and drives away.

CUT TO:

INT. SCOREBOARDS SPORTS BAR -- NIGHT

Joel sits at the bar talking to Dean, drinking a beer.

JOEL
I can't believe my wife slept with that guy.

DEAN
Well... I thought you said it wouldn't bother you.

JOEL
I guess I didn't really think about it long enough... I just wish it hadn't been so easy for him.

DEAN
Yeah, I'm tellin' ya, chicks really go wild for that Brad...
(Off Joel's look)
Sorry.

JOEL
No, you're right. He may be a stupid, dull-witted moron, but he can get any girl he wants. Me, I had to work for it. I had to work hard, get a career going, take Suzie out a bunch of times, marry her. But not Brad. He gets to waltz into my house and have sex with my wife just like that. Oh, and by the way? That little prick was at my house again today.

DEAN
No shit? What was he doing?

JOEL
Take a wild guess.

DEAN
Wow... You pay a guy to do a job, then he comes back and does it for free.

JOEL
I'm not going to let him do it for free. No way. I'm paying him.

DEAN
Really? How much?

JOEL
Oh, I don't know. The same, I guess. Why?

DEAN
Hmm... So should I get my twenty dollars from Brad then or...

Joel shoots Dean an angry look.

DEAN (cont'd)
We can worry about that later... Look at the bright side, now you can call Cindy.

JOEL
I don't know... I feel weird about it. Besides, she's at the party, she probably won't be home 'til late.

DEAN
You know what you need to do?

JOEL
(rolling his eyes)
I don't wanna do drugs Dean.

DEAN
Look, I know I joke around a lot, but this time I'm serious.
(like a doctor)
You should try smoking a little pot. It's just an herb, it heals. Stress can kill you, and--

JOEL
I get paranoid when I smoke pot.

DEAN
Not when you just smoke a little. Come on. You ever meet my friend Willie? Great guy. Really great guy.
(as if it's a positive)
He's the guy I got that horse tranquilizer from.

JOEL
Oh, wonderful.

INT. WILLIE'S APARTMENT -- NIGHT

WILLIE loads up some kind of giant three-foot tall bong and inhales a massive bong-load. He's a burly ex-football player type who looks like he might have an extra y-chromosome or two. Joel watches Willie, feeling a little uneasy. Dean pontificates.

DEAN
... I've been reading about it -- they're making technological advances now, coming up with great drugs that can make you happy and won't leave you with a hangover or nothin'. *

WILLIE
(holding in bong-hit)
Right on.

Willie finally exhales. The exhale seems to go on way longer than humanly possible, endless amounts of pot-smoke billowing out (accomplished with special FX). He finally hands the bong and lighter to Joel.

JOEL
Oh, I don't know... I'm kind of a light weight. I think that's too much for me--

WILLIE
(still holding out the bong and lighter)
Bullshit.

DEAN
Come on Joel. Don't worry, this stuff isn't that strong.
(to Willie, re: Joel)
(MORE)

DEAN (CONT'D)
He gets paranoid when he gets too stoned.

Joel looks at Willie then at Dean, then takes the bong, partly out of being intimidated by Willie.

JOEL
Ah, what the hell.

Willie instructs Joel on the bong usage in the same condescending way a weight-lifting instructor would.

WILLIE
Okay, now this is a gravity bong. Have you ever used one before?

JOEL
Umm, I think... no.

WILLIE
Okay, pay attention. Put your thumb right here on the carburetor. When I pull the plunger up and say, "let go" I want you to let go and inhale <u>hard</u>.

Joel's POV: Looking down the barrel of the three-foot bong with macho-man Willie holding the lighter at the bowl.

WILLIE (cont'd)
Okay exhale!

JOEL
You know, maybe I should just let you guys--

WILLIE
(starting to get scary)
Bullshit! EXHALE HARD!

Mostly out of fear, Joel exhales. Willie puts the bong up to Joel's face, lights it and starts lifting the plunger. Then pushes it down.

WILLIE (cont'd)
Let go! Inhale! NOW!

Joel lets go of the carburator, inhales.

WILLIE (cont'd)
(insane)
GO! GO! HARDER!!!

Joel inhales with all his might, sucking up massive amounts of thick pot smoke as Willie pushes down the plunger.

STONER-RIPPLE
DISSOLVE TO:

WILLIE'S APARTMENT -- NIGHT

Willie, Dean and Joel sitting around, completely baked -- especially Joel. (We play most of the scene from Joel's stoned, paranoid POV.)

Dean makes some kind of barely audible mumble -- or did he?

JOEL
What?

Long pause.

DEAN
Huh?

Joel's POV: looking from Dean to Willie. Willie sits there with red eyes barely open. Willie turns slowly to Joel.

WILLIE
Huh?

JOEL
Oh, I thought somebody said something.

Willie looks at Joel, stone-faced, adding even further to Joel's paranoia. He stares at Joel for a long beat. Then, in an instant, he's right up in Joel's face.

WILLIE
BWAAAAAAAAAAAH!!!

Joel jumps back, scared shitless. Willie starts laughing his ass off.

WILLIE
Haaaah ha... The look on your face!
(insane cackle)
Man you really do get paranoid when you get stoned.

JOEL
(fake, timid laugh)
Yeah, heh heh...

DEAN
Hey Joel, why don't you call that chick now?

JOEL
What time is it?

WILLIE
Time for you to call her and finally get laid man!
(handing him the phone)
Come on!

DEAN
It's twelve thirty. She might be back by now.

JOEL
Alright.

Joel gets the phone number out of his pocket.

WILLIE
So what's this chick look like?

JOEL
Oh, she's got brown hair. Pretty hot. Kind of working-class looking...

WILLIE
What do you mean by that?

Willie stares at Joel for a beat. Joel can't tell if he's offended Willie or not.

JOEL
Umm... Oh you know,...

WILLIE
Is she kind of slutty lookin'?

JOEL
Yeah...

Beat. Joel's not sure if that was the right answer either.

WILLIE
Alright! That's how I like 'em.

JOEL
Yeah...
(uncomfortable laugh)
Kinda nasty, heh heh...

Joel starts dialing the number.

JOEL (cont'd)
I hope I don't wake her up...
(listens)
It's busy.

DEAN
Alright. At least you know she's home.

JOEL
Yeah.

WILLIE
Try her again. Come on.

Joel hits redial.

JOEL
Still busy... Man, what kind of person doesn't have call-waiting.

WILLIE
I don't have call-waiting. I hate call-waiting. Every time I hear that goddamn clicking sound, I wanna put my fist through someone's head.

Beat. Once again, Joel doesn't know whether to shit or wind his watch. Willie stares at him, then

WILLIE
Haaa ha! Man you really do get paranoid when you're stoned... Seriously though, I fuckin' hate call-waiting.

JOEL
(nervous chuckle)
Yeah...

Willie grabs the phone.

WILLIE
Here let me dial. You're too stoned.

Willie grabs the piece of paper with Cindy's number. He looks at it, starts to dial, then pauses, realizing something.

Willie looks up at Joel, with slowly building rage, then hangs up the phone.

WILLIE
I'll tell you why you're getting a busy signal. This is my number.

JOEL
Huh? But...

Beat.

JOEL
Oh... You're joking right? Trying to make me paranoid?

Joel waits for Willie to start cracking up. He doesn't. He just continues glaring at Joel. We hear the FRONT DOOR UNLOCK. Everyone looks.

CINDY enters.

CINDY
Hi. Sorry I'm late, I...
(noticing Joel)
Joel? What are you doing here...?

Willie stands up and walks over to Joel's chair. Dean suddenly stands up.

DEAN
Well, it looks like you guys got a lot to talk about here so I think I'm just gonna go ahead and take off. Later guys.

Dean bolts. Willie moves in closer on Joel. Joel starts to leave, but Willie blocks him.

WILLIE
Kinda slutty?

Willie grabs Joel and throws him against the wall. Joel tries to make a break for the door, but Willie hauls off and punches him across the face. The ass-kicking begins as we

CUT TO:

INT. JOEL'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

Joel limps into the house, his face bruised black and blue from the ass-kicking. He looks awful.

As he limps into the bedroom as quietly as possible, he trips on something, waking up Suzie. She turns on a light and sees Joel.

SUZIE
Oh my God Joel, are you alright? What happened?

JOEL
I'm fine. I'm fine. I just ah... got my ass kicked. Go back to sleep.

SUZIE
What? By who? What happened?

JOEL
It was just... some guy over at Scoreboards.

SUZIE
Let me drive you to the hospital. You need to get checked out.

JOEL
No. I'll be fine. I just want to sleep right now, okay?

SUZIE
You sure you're okay? It looks like your nose is broken, and your eye--

JOEL
(agitated)
Don't worry about it! People get their asses kicked all the time! It's no big deal. Go back to sleep.

INT. REYNOLD'S EXTRACT BUILDING - MORNING

Joel walks past his Secretary.

SECRETARY
Hi Joel. Brian wanted to see you--
(noticing)
Oh my God, what happened?

Joel keeps walking, MUMBLES something about falling down some stairs, goes into his office and shuts the door.

INT. JOEL'S OFFICE -- CONTINUOUS ACTION

Joel walks over to the window overlooking the production area. He looks down and sees Cindy working, with her back turned. Shakes his head.

Brian KNOCKS on the door and enters, looking worried.

BRIAN
Hi... Did you talk to Step yet?

JOEL
He isn't returning my calls.

BRIAN
Shit... We've got problems. He did hire a lawyer -- Joe Adler -- he's that personal injury lawyer you see on all the bus-stop benches. You oughtta see this guy. He's a real piece of shi--
(noticing Joel's face)
Oh man, what happened to you?

JOEL
Oh, I fell down some stairs.

BRIAN
Damn... Well anyway, I hate to say this, but I think we're screwed. There's no way this Adler guy is gonna settle for anything less then bankrupting us. Says he'll sue us into the stone age.

JOEL
(clutches his head miserable)
Shit... I gotta talk to Step.

Brian looks at Joel's bruised face.

BRIAN
Man, everyone's getting hurt. Cindy came in with a black eye today. You hear how she got it?

JOEL
Ah... no.

BRIAN
Step did it. Can you believe that?

JOEL
No he--!
(catches himself)
What? Where did you hear that?

BRIAN
That's what she told Mary.

JOEL
But... Step? Does he even know her?

BRIAN
Apparently they've been going out.

JOEL
What?!

BRIAN
I know, it's weird. They didn't even meet here. They met at a grocery store or something. Just a total coincidence.

Joel looks down at Cindy on the production floor, his mind reeling.

BRIAN
Anyway, we're gonna have to hire a couple of new people because Cindy's quitting--

JOEL
Really?

BRIAN
Yep. And if it's okay with you, I'd like to go ahead and fire Hector.

JOEL
Fire Hector? What for?

BRIAN
You know, Mary's purse? Sylvia's wallet? It's gotta be him. Who else could it be?

Joel looks down at Cindy with growing suspicion.

JOEL
No. Don't fire him. Just trust me on this. Give him another week. If anything else is stolen, then you can fire him.

BRIAN
(puzzled)
Alright. If you say so. *

Brian looks Joel over.

BRIAN (cont'd)
Man, are you okay? Have you seen a doctor?

Joel's Secretary BEEPS in.

SECRATARY (V.O.)
Joel, Dean is on line one for you.

JOEL
Okay, thanks.
(to Brian)
I better get this.

Brian leaves.

JOEL (cont'd)
Hello.

DEAN
Hey man. Sorry I bailed on you like that last night. It's just that I don't like to get involved in other people's personal shit, you know what I mean?

JOEL
Uh-huh.

DEAN
I didn't even know Willie had a girlfriend. She must be new. Man, Willie looked pissed.
(chuckles)
(MORE)

DEAN (CONT'D)
I thought he was gonna take a swing at you there for a second.

JOEL
He did take a swing at me Dean. Several swings. In fact, he beat the living shit out of me.

DEAN
Whoa, really?

JOEL
Yes.

DEAN
Wow. Man, that really goes to show you -- this town is smaller than you think. You really gotta be careful.

Joel hangs up and walks out of his office, past his Secretary.

JOEL
I'm not feeling well. I'm going to go home early.

INT. JOEL'S CAR -- DAY

Joel turns the corner to his house and does a double-take as he sees BRAD'S TRUCK going the opposite direction.

JOEL
Shit!

Joel slams on the brakes, turns around, chases Brad's truck down and cuts him off, forcing him to stop. They both get out of their vehicles. Joel is livid.

JOEL
What the hell were you doing on my street again?!

BRAD
Dude, you weren't supposed to be home for another four hours-- Whoa, what happened to your face?

JOEL
(trying to improvise a tough, snappy comeback, but can't quite make it work)
(MORE)

JOEL (CONT'D)
The same thing that's gonna happen.. Your face is gonna look worse if... GOD DAMMIT! If I ever catch you anywhere near my house or my wife again, I'll have you arrested.

BRAD
For what? Suzie let me in.

Joel is stumped -- Brad actually has a point.

JOEL
What the hell is wrong with you anyway? Do you do this with all your clients -- just keep coming back and hanging around?

BRAD
I don't know. This is my first one.

JOEL
What?! I thought you were a professional!

BRAD
Look man, I know she's your wife an' shit, but you might as well know -- I think we're in love.

JOEL
In love?!
(coming unglued)
HA! Man are you stupid. You are so goddamn dumb. You think she loves you? You're nothing but a piece of ass to her. That's all.

BRAD
I don't think so dude.

JOEL
Oh, you don't think so "dude?" Well did you ever think about this: she doesn't even know that I paid you to have sex with her -- did that cross your small mind?

BRAD
Uuh..

JOEL
How about I go home right now and tell her? Tell her you did it for the money. How about that loverboy?

Brad suddenly looks worried. This really freaks him out.

BRAD
You wouldn't do that.

JOEL
You don't think so? Watch me.

BRAD
(realizing he's serious)
No... Dude, please don't. Please?

Joel starts back to his car.

BRAD
Look man, we really have a special thing going on. Please don't mess it up...

Joel stops.

JOEL
Don't mess it up?! You're talking about my wife! My house! Stupid-ass!

Joel gets in his car and starts it.

BRAD
(calls out to him)
Dude, you can't do this to me.

JOEL
Oh yes I can...

Joel peels out, drives half a block and turns into his driveway.

INT. JOEL'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Joel walks in, still pissed off. Suzie is sitting on the couch, a little surprised to see him.

SUZIE
Oh hi. You're home early.

JOEL
(cold)
Hi.

Joel walks over to the sliding glass door, looks outside at the pool. It's filthy.

JOEL
So how was that new pool cleaner?

Suzie is caught off guard -- wonders if she's busted -- but she plays it cool.

SUZIE
Um... What do you mean?

JOEL
What do you think I mean?... Did he do a good job cleaning the pool?

SUZIE
Ah... well--

JOEL
Did he get all the... leaves? It doesn't really look that clean. I mean I'm looking at it, and I'd say it's pretty goddamn filthy. Did the guy even clean it at all? It sure doesn't look like it.

SUZIE
(nervous)
Well yeah, I guess he didn't do a very good job.

JOEL
I think he did a horrible job. I don't think we should use him anymore.

SUZIE
Okay.

JOEL
Okay.

Suzie watches Joel leave, a slight look of guilt on her face.

SUZIE
Are you all right, Joel? You want an aspirin or anything?

JOEL
No.

INT. JOEL'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Quick shot of Joel staring up at the ceiling shaking his head, can't believe all this.

EXT. STEP'S HOUSE -- NEXT DAY

In a WIDE SHOT we see Joel's car is parked on the street. He walks up and rings the doorbell. We see Step answer, talk to him and then invite him in.

INT. STEP'S HOUSE -- CONTINUOUS

Step and Joel enter. Step's 300 POUND HALF-BROTHER sits on a ratty couch watching TV, drinking a huge plastic bottle of Pepsi. He looks like he's been sitting there for years. The TV is deafeningly loud.

STEP
Wow, I don't think you've ever been to my house before. Have you?

JOEL
(talking above the TV)
Yeah, I don't think so. I would've remembered...

STEP
This is my half brother Phil.

Joel starts to motion "don't get up," then realizes that's not happening anyway. Phil nods.

JOEL
Hi... Hey Step, can we talk in another room.

STEP
Sure, let's go out back.

EXT. STEP'S HOUSE - BACK YARD -- A LITTLE LATER

Joel and Step sit at a picnic table.

STEP
You know, my lawyer told me not to talk to you.
(beat)
You're not here to try to talk me out of suing are you?

JOEL
Oh, no... No, I'm just kind of curious about... ah... So you've been going out with Cindy, huh?

STEP
Yes sir. She's my girlfriend. We might even get married after all this lawsuit-settlement stuff gets worked out.

JOEL
...so some of the guys at work are saying you gave Cindy that black eye.

STEP
What? That ain't true at all.

JOEL
Yeah, I know it's not.

STEP
She got it from falling down some stairs.

JOEL
Hmm... Look, you might wanna be careful with Cindy.

STEP
(defensive)
What do you mean?

JOEL
Well, I'm not sure how to put this, but... You know, you got a lot of money coming your way with this settlement. You might wanna be careful--

STEP
Oh no. No, she didn't even know about that 'til after we started going out.

JOEL
You sure about that?

STEP
Oh yeah. I didn't tell her about it for a while 'cuz I was kind of embarrassed, you know? You don't tell a girl you just met that you lost one of your balls. Especially a girl as hot as Cindy.

JOEL
Yeah...
(delicately)
You know she lives with this guy Willie right?

STEP
That's her ex. She broke up with him. She's gonna move out. She just needs to get all her stuff outta there.

JOEL
You sure about that?

STEP
Oh yeah. She's moving in with me.

JOEL
Oh. Hmm...

STEP
Look, I know Cindy's got some problems, but she means well. She's the best thing that ever happened to me.

JOEL
Well, okay... If you say so. Another thing -- you just might want to watch your back. Some of the guys at work who think you gave Cindy the black eye were talking about paying you a visit -- you know, getting even.

STEP
Oh. Well I'm not worried about that.
(dead-serious, proud)
I could kick anyone's ass at that whole company.

INT. JOEL'S HOUSE - DAY

Brad and Suzie are by the pool which is filthy. Brad starts coming on to Suzie. She pushes him away.

SUZIE
No Brad, we can't. I'm sorry, but we have to stop doing this.

BRAD
Why?

SUZIE
It's not right. I feel horrible. Besides, I think Joel's getting suspicious. And you gotta start cleaning the pool too.

BRAD
But I've never felt this way about anyone before. And I've been with a lot of chicks.

SUZIE
(turned off)
Uh-huh... Look Brad, the truth is I love my husband. I really do. This was all a big mistake. I'm sorry. I don't know what got into me, but we have to stop this. I want to make my marriage work again. I'm going to tell Joel about the whole thing and just hope he forgives me. And even if he doesn't, at least I won't be carrying around this horrible feeling. I just can't stand that he doesn't know.

BRAD
Uh... This doesn't mean we can't still see each other though, right?

SUZIE
Ah, yes it does.

BRAD
Why?

SUZIE
Because of all the things I just said.
(MORE)

SUZIE (CONT'D)
(Patiently)
Do you need me to say them again?

BRAD
Can I see you tomorrow?

SUZIE
No.

BRAD
(pleading)
How about next week?

SUZIE
No. Look, you gotta go Brad. Joel could be home any second.

BRAD
I'll call you tomorrow.

SUZIE
(just trying to get rid of him)
Okay. Okay, just go and we'll talk later.

Brad leans to kiss her, she pushed him away and he finally leaves.

SUZIE
(to herself)
God, what a moron.

INT. JOEL'S OFFICE - DAY

Joel sits deep in his chair, bummed out, staring down at the manufacturing area. Brian walks in.

BRIAN
So... you ready?

JOEL
Huh?

BRIAN
The meeting with Step's lawyer. Or lawyers I should say. It's today remember?

JOEL
Oh shit... Alright.

Joel drags himself out of the chair.

INT. REYNOLDS EXTRACT - CONFRENCE ROOM - DAY

JOE ADLER, is holding court with the various lawyers and paralegals waiting for the meeting to start. As promised, he is awful. He looks like Henry Winkler with an extra Y chromosome and a lot of steroids. (Maybe cast Gene Simmons with his hair pulled back in a pony tail.)

ADLER
...You see, if both his balls had been knocked clean off, he would be a good case, but not a great case: A man with no balls is no man at all. He's a freak. He's barely human. He's gross. And a jury will never feel like they can walk in the shoes of a ball-less, neutered, he/she freak. But Step. He's still got one ball - barely. He's still a man. A man who's very manhood has been jeopardized, but still a man. And that manhood, that very sense of what you are as a human being is hanging by a thread. Jesus, you can't get more dramatic than that. That brave ball, hanging on for dear life, hanging on for justice, is going to be the hero of this trial. I'm tellin' ya this Step guy is the fuckin' Holy Grail, the Powerball Jackpot. And you all laughed at me when I bought those bus bench ads. But I knew the asses of those poor slobs that sit on those benches and ride those sweaty, stinking, cattle cars are our future. And I --

Joel and Brian walk in.

ADLER
Oh, hello. I'm Joe Adler...

Everybody starts introducing each other.

INT. REYNOLDS EXTRACT - EMPLOYEE BREAK ROOM - DAY

A bunch of employees including Mary, Garielle, and Rory are talking, getting worked up.

RORY
...And when they sell the company, Joel and Brian are gonna be the one's who get rich, and--

MARY
And we're the ones doing all the work.

GABRIELLE
That's right.

RORY
It's bullshit man. We should get a piece of it. I work my ass off.

MARY
Gabrielle and I work harder than anybody. I should be making what Brian makes. If you add up all the crates I move, I lift 10,000 pounds a day. Minimum.

GABRIELLE
That's right. Here he's gonna make a million dollars, and we're the ones who do everything. I went to college. For three years.

MARY
If we quit, this place couldn't run. They wouldn't be able to sell this place for anything.

JIM, a tall skinny 50-something guy with a ridiculously big mustache and a little paunch, chimes in.

JIM
That's why what we should do is, is we should all go on strike -- demand stock in the company before it sells. If General Mills knew we were on strike, they wouldn't buy this place until the strike was over. That way they'd <u>have</u> to give us stock.

Jim points to his head, gives everyone a "how's that" nod. It starts to build steam.

RORY
That's right man. We should do it. We should strike.

MARY
That's right. I could get a job at Gemco like that. At Gemco, all the employees are owners -- even says so on the name tags.

GABRIELLE
Mmm hmm. I could get a job at Southwest Airlines...

INT. REYNOLDS EXTRACT - CONFRENCE ROOM - DAY

The meeting is already in progress. On Adler's side of the table are two other lawyers and a couple of paralegals. On Joel's side it's just he, Brian and Joel's secretary. Maybe one lawyer who doesn't say much.

Everybody has in front of them a small stack of documents. The confrence room, like Joel's office, has a full length window facing the manufacturing area.

ADLER
Ok gentlemen. We've gone through everything and the only way we would even begin to consider a settlement would be to the tune of the number you see on the bottom of page 18. Does everyone have this?

Joel and the rest of them find page 18. Joel is stunned by the number.

JOEL
What!!!?
(so pissed he can barely get the words out)
We don't have this much money! Not even close!

ADLER
Not in cash you don't. Of course not. But if you were to sell off your assets: the property lease, the equipment, the--

JOEL
What the ff-- Are you shitting me!? That would bankrupt us!

BRIAN
This is what I've been trying to tell you Joel...

JOEL
If you think I'm just going to give up this entire company that I built from the ground up--

Adler jumps up, dripping with phoney, forced indignation.

ADLER
How about what my client gave up!? His testicles! How about that!?

He walks over to the door...

ADLER
In fact, I'll make a deal with you -- we will drop this case right now if you come over here and put your testicles right here
(indicates the space between the door and the hinges)
and let me slam this door like this...

Adler SLAMS the door ridiculously hard.

ADLER
Go ahead. We can settle this right now -- call it even. I will drop this case right now if you let me slam your balls in this door, BECAUSE THAT IS WHAT HAPPENED TO MY CLIENT!

JOEL
It was an accident!

ADLER
Not according to our investigation. We believe that, in fact, there was gross negligence...

INT. REYNOLDS EXTRACT - MANUFACTURING AREA - CONTINUOUS

The employees, same ones in the breakroom, are milling around, talking, the idea of the strike gaining momentum. Rory points up to the confrence room.

RORY
I heard those guys up there are the guys from General Mills.

Employees' POV: Adler pacing around, yelling, Joel yelling back, etc. [They can't hear any of it.]

MARY
Mmm hmm...

JIM
See, now they're probably up there negotiating right now -- cuttin' up the pie that we baked. That's what it looks like to me.

The employees all nod in agreement.

Employees POV: Adler pointing at his balls, pointing to the door again, about to slam it. One of his lawyers stops him.

RORY
We gotta act fast. They could be about to close the deal.

JIM
Yeah, and leave us out in the cold.

RORY
Yeah, then it's too late. If they've already sold it we can't get a piece of it. We gotta act fast. We need to do one of those walk outs.

JIM
Well, we better do it now.

RORY
Okay, who's in? We need a show of force. Come on, it's now or never...

We PAN around the employees as the idea builds momentum, ending on HECTOR, who looks completely confused by it all.

INT. REYNOLDS EXTRACT - CONFRENCE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The meeting heats up.

ADLER
Okay then, let me go back to my previous offer: I will gladly come down on that price -- I'll come all the way down to zero and drop this case -- if you go over there right now and slam your testicles in that door! Because--

JOEL
I don't wanna slam my testicles in the door! I want you to be reasonable! You won't even budge one penny! Come on!

ADLER
Like I say, if you slam your--

JOEL
I'll slam your balls in the door!

ADLER
I'm sorry, did you just threaten me?

Brian puts his hand on Joel, motions him to calm down.

BRIAN
Look, we need to cool off a minute. We'll be right back.

Brian leads Joel out of the room.

HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

JOEL
I don't need this. I'm going home.

INT. REYNOLDS EXTRACT - MANUFACTURING AREA - CONTINUOUS

Joel walks down the stairs. The group of employees see him and ready themselves for the big confrontation. Joel notices them all looking at him and stops.

JOEL
Yeah?... What?

But they are ill-prepared. No one knows who should talk first. It's incredibly awkward. They all look at each other and mutter things like, "go ahead" "you first". Finally...

RORY
Umm... We were just uh...

JIM
Well, Rory was talking about how you guys are doing this deal with General Mills and we just think that ah... We were considering the idea of ah...

RORY
Well, we just think that we should maybe get a piece of it, you know cuz we do all the work... And if we don't... um...

Joel's in no mood for this. He goes off on them.

JOEL
You know what? Fine. Fine. You're all in charge -- all of you.
(gestures to all the employees)
As of now. You run the goddamn place. Go ahead. In fact, you can go up there right now and meet with Adler. He may slam your balls in the door, but woohoo! You're the boss!

Joel storms out, leaving the employees standing there.

A BICKERING MATCH erupts over who was supposed to do the talking, who said they would say what, who backed down first, etc. "I was gonna say something but you interrupted," "You didn't say anything when he was leaving, so I thought you were quitting. I would've stood up to him."

As the argument dies down, One by one they all go back to their posts, muttering.

INT. JOEL'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Joel is sitting at the table, picking at some food, looking miserable. Suzie comes over, gathers up her nerve.

SUZIE
Listen Joel, there's something I have to tell you. I think we need to be honest with each other.

Suzie sits down.

SUZIE (cont'd)
I'm not sure how to say this, but -- well, you've been so caught up in you're work lately, and I'm here alone all day and sometimes I just--

JOEL
You banged the pool cleaner.

SUZIE
Wha...

Suzie is stunned.

JOEL
That's what you're trying to tell me right? You had sex with Brad?

SUZIE
You knew?

JOEL
Yes I knew. I hired him.

SUZIE
Well I know you hired him, but how did you know about--

JOEL
I don't mean I hired him to clean the pool, I mean I hired him to have sex with you.

SUZIE
What?

JOEL
He's a gigolo Suzie.

Suzie is stupefied.

SUZIE
But... what.... Why?

Joel is so fed up, he just tells her everything.

JOEL
I hired him to have an affair with you so that I could have an affair without feeling guilty. I was really drunk and on some kind of horse tranquilizer and--

SUZIE
Brad was getting paid?...
(disbelief, hurt)
So you've been paying Brad this whole time? All fifteen times?!

JOEL
FIFTEEN TIMES?! Jesus Christ Suzie!

Joel sinks into his chair, shaking his head.

JOEL (cont'd)
I only paid him once -- well, twice. The rest was on the house.

Long beat as Suzie tries to let it all sink in.

SUZIE
You wanted to have an affair with another woman?

JOEL
Yes. But I didn't.

Suzie paces around for a moment, reeling, processing all this. Then, decisively,

SUZIE
You asshole.

JOEL
Oh, I'm the asshole?

SUZIE
Yes! How could you?

JOEL
(laughs)
How could I? How could you?!!! You didn't have to have sex with him. You could've simply said "No thanks. Just clean the pool," but you didn't, did you?! No, you took him up on his little offer and had sex with him -- <u>fifteen</u> <u>times</u>!

SUZIE
None of this would've happened if you hadn't hired him.

JOEL
Okay. I'll admit, I made a big mistake. I was drunk, on drugs, stressed, sexually frustrated and I shouldn't have hired a male prostitute to seduce you. But if you had simply been faithful, none of this would've happened.

Suzie just looks at him for a beat.

SUZIE
You're sick, you know that?

Beat. Joel can't really argue this point.

JOEL
What do you see in Brad anyway? He's borderline retarded. You probably could've been arrested for having sex with a guy that dumb.

SUZIE
That's it. I'm leaving.

Suzie heads for the door. Joel follows after her.

JOEL
No. You're not leaving me. I'm leaving you!

SUZIE
Fine.

Joel opens the door, about to storm out, only to find

NATHAN, standing right there about to ring the doorbell.

NATHAN
Oh, hey guys. Glad I caught ya. You guys hardly ever answer the door. Heh heh.

They are both so flustered, they can barely talk.

SUZIE
Now's not a good time Nathan.

Joel turns around, storms off back into the house.

NATHAN
Oh, you guys goin' somewhere?

SUZIE
No. Look, we can't talk right now.

NATHAN
Well, you think I could go ahead and get that check from ya then? I'm just trying to balance my checkbook here...

SUZIE
Now's not a good time.

NATHAN
When would be a good time, you think?

SUZIE
I don't know.

NATHAN
See the thing is--

SUZIE
Okay tomorrow.

NATHAN
Great, what time?

SUZIE
I don't know. Just come by tomorrow. I can't talk now.

NATHAN
Okay great. And if you could just go ahead and have that check, that'd be great. It's a hundred and ten. That's two plates at fifty-five--

SUZIE
Yeah, Okay...

Suzie shuts the door, cutting him off.

EXT. EXTENDED STAY AMERICA SUITES -- DAY

Joel checks into an Extended Stay America hotel.(a chain of hotels that rent by the week.)

Quick shot of Joel sitting alone in the room. He drops his suitcase and glumly sits down on the bed, grabs the remote.

He turns on Spectravision and surfs the Adult titles, decides he's not into it and switches back to regular TV only to find American Idol is on. He stares at it for a beat, then flops * down on the bed and stares at the ceiling.

INT. SCOREBOARDS SPORTS BAR -- NIGHT

Joel sits at the bar, drowning his sorrows. Dean is over by the cash register, tending to some business. Brad enters, walks over to Joel. Joel looks the other way.

BRAD
Hey man... I know you probably want to kick my ass, but--

JOEL
I couldn't kick your ass if I wanted to. You're a good 10 years younger than me, and I'm a pussy. So why don't you just leave me alone.

BRAD
I just wanted to tell you, I'm not gonna see Suzie anymore. You don't have to worry.

Joel keeps drinking his beer, stares straight ahead.

BRAD
The last time I was over there, she broke it off; told me to quit coming over... She said she was gonna tell you everything -- you know, about us. She's really into you dude. I guess that's why she married you an' shit... You're a lucky guy... Sorry if I messed shit up.

Beat. Joel takes another swig.

JOEL
Why'd you have to get hung up on Suzie? You could have any girl you want.

BRAD
Yeah, but I want Suzie. And I can't have her.

JOEL
You had her fifteen times.

BRAD
Yeah, but she doesn't love me dude. It's just not the same... Anyway, just wanted to tell you that.

JOEL
Well... You told me.

BRAD
Alright, later...

Brad starts to leave. Then he stops, turns around.

BRAD
Oh, one more thing... I quit my landscaping job... And I don't think I'm really cut out to be a gigolo. So I was wondering if you had any openings over there at your extract place?

JOEL
(exasperated sigh)
Brad, you had sex with my wife. I'm not gonna give you a job, okay?

BRAD
Okay... Sorry man.

Brad walks away. Joel stares at his beer for a beat, thinking. He calls out to Brad.

JOEL
Hey Brad?...

Brad stops.

BRAD
Yeah?

JOEL
I don't know... Maybe come by the office tomorrow. Fill out an application. I'll see what I can do.

BRAD
Cool. Thanks man.

INT. JOEL'S OFFICE - NEXT DAY

Brian sits with Joel. They both look pretty miserable. Brian looks down at some papers, shaking his head.

BRIAN
We're screwed. General Mills has pretty much withdrawn the offer pending a really favorable settlement with Step.
(shaking his head)
Not only do we not sell the company, we could wind up bankrupt.

JOEL
(muttering to himself)
So I don't sell the company, don't get the money, I'm bankrupt, I don't get Cindy, I paid a guy to have sex with my wife, and she actually did it...

BRIAN
Excuse me?

JOEL
Nothing.

EXT. JOEL'S HOUSE - POOL -- DAY

Suzie is trying to clean the pool herself, struggling with the long pole with the net at the end. She looks miserable.

NATHAN (O.S.)
Hello?

Nathan enters through the back gate.

SUZIE
(mutters)
Shit...

Nathan walks over to Suzie. She's in no mood for this. She acts as unfriendly as possible.

NATHAN
Why are you cleaning the pool yourself? That new guy didn't work out?

SUZIE
Yeah, didn't work out.

NATHAN
Boy, you just can't get good help, eh?

SUZIE
Yeah.

NATHAN
So, did you get a chance to write that check?

SUZIE
Look Nathan, Joel and I aren't going to that dinner okay?

Nathan acts deeply disappointed.

NATHAN
Well gee, I wish you would've told me that before I went and bought the tickets.

SUZIE
Joel never agreed to this Nathan, and neither did I.

NATHAN
Well, it sure sounded like you guys were going. Leslie was gonna talk to you about it, but you didn't return our calls. I mean, I already bought these tickets. They're nonrefundable. I really wish you guys had been a little more clear with me...

It's the last straw. Suzie has had enough. She unleashes all her pent-up aggression on Nathan.

SUZIE
Okay, let me be really clear with you then. When we say "I don't think so," or even "I'm not sure," that means "no." Why can't you understand that?

NATHAN
Well, I just--

SUZIE
Shut up! In fact, let me be even more clear with you. We don't like you! Is that clear enough? You're dull, you never shut up, you never listen, and we don't want anything to do with you ever again!

Nathan freezes, in some kind of state of shock. He starts to shake a little. Suzie just keeps going -- it feels too good to stop.

SUZIE
Is that clear enough for you Nathan?! Is that...?

Nathan starts to go into some kind of seizure.

SUZIE
(worried)
Nathan?

Nathan's eyes roll back into his head, and he collapses. Suzie SCREAMS.

EXT. EXTENDED STAY AMERICA SUITES -- NIGHT

Joel pulls into the parking lot. He looks surprised, seeing something on the other side of the lot that gets his attention.

JOEL
(to himself)
No way...

From JOEL'S POV, we see Cindy pull up and get out of her car. Joel watches as she gets out with a grocery bag and heads up the stairs. Joel gets out and watches her from a distance. He sees her go into a room and shut the door.

He stares up at the door for a beat. Then, with a look of determination, Joel walks up the stairs and knocks on her door.

INT. CINDY'S ROOM -- CONTINUOUS ACTION

Cindy opens the door, a little startled to see Joel, but pleasant to him.

CINDY
Oh... Joel. I ah,...

JOEL
Hi.

CINDY
What're you...? What's up? How'd you know I was here?

JOEL
Ah, actually, I'm staying here too. Down on the first floor, around the back. I thought I saw you so I ah...

CINDY
Well, come in.

Joel enters, stands in the living room. Cindy heads in to the kitchen.

CINDY (O.S.)
Do you want something to drink? I think all I have is Diet Coke.

Joel notices MARY'S PURSE lying on the coffee table. He stares at it.

JOEL
No thanks.

Cindy comes back in with a Diet Coke.

CINDY
Have a seat.

Joel remains standing, looking at the purse.

JOEL
That's Mary's purse... Isn't it?

CINDY
What?

JOEL
Right there. That's Mary's purse.

CINDY
Oh that? No, that's mine... So how are things at work?

JOEL
That's Mary's purse. You stole it, didn't you?

Cindy acts like he's being silly. There's nothing about her demeanor that would make anybody think she's lying.

CINDY
No. It probably just looks like it. There's a lot of those.

JOEL
I've never seen another one. You probably have Sylvia's wallet in here somewhere too, don't you? And everything else that's been stolen from my employees.

CINDY
Joel, are you okay?

JOEL
No, I'm not. That's Mary's purse Goddammit! Okay? Everyone blamed Hector. He almost got fired. Doesn't that bother you?

CINDY
(innocent, sweet)
Joel, I don't know what you're--

JOEL
Hector! Hard working guy, never did anything wrong. And what are you doing with Step? You're trying to screw him out of his settlement money aren't you?

CINDY
I have no idea what you're talking about.

JOEL
Yes you do! You're the only reason he's suing us aren't you? You know how much work it took for me to build up that company? You just don't care about anybody do you? What are you, some kind of sociopath?

Cindy looks like Joel might be getting to her.

JOEL (cont'd)
You can't even admit that you stole this purse can you? You just can't do it.
(MORE)

JOEL (cont'd)
In fact, you probably can't tell the truth about much of anything, can you?...

Cindy turns away from him, looking down at the floor.

JOEL
I bet Cindy's not even your real name is it? Who are you? Where the hell are you from?

Cindy, still looking away, doesn't answer.

JOEL (cont'd)
You can't answer can you? Because if you said one true thing, you'd have to tell the truth about something else and then it would all unravel wouldn't it? Then you'd have to admit that you stole this purse and God knows what else.

Beat. Cindy still looking away, down at the floor. We see her eyes well up, about to cry, but Joel doesn't notice.

JOEL
(composes himself)
Well, I'm leaving now.

Joel picks up the purse.

JOEL
And I'm taking this purse with me. If it really is yours, you can call the police and tell 'em I stole it... In fact, I'm gonna call the police and report it...

Joel walks towards the door. Then Cindy slumps down on the couch, mutters something, still looking down at the floor, her voice cracking slightly.

CINDY
Please don't...

Joel stops.

JOEL
What?

CINDY
(still looking down)
Please don't report it to the police. I'm on probation. I'll go to jail. For a long time.

JOEL
Well... Maybe you should've thought about that before you started ripping off my employees.

Joel starts to open the door.

CINDY
Joel? Please? I'll leave Step alone. I promise. He'll drop the lawsuit.

Joel considers this.

JOEL
How do I know that?

CINDY
You can keep the purse. If I don't leave him alone; if he doesn't drop the lawsuit, then you can report me. Please?

Beat.

JOEL
Hmm... I guess that ah... Do you have Sylvia's wallet, and Jim's watch? Can I get those too?

Beat. Cindy nods, still looking down. Joel considers it.

JOEL
Well... Okay then. I guess that works.
(realizing)
And I guess you just admitted that you stole the purse. That's good, I guess... A step in the right direction...

Joel sits down on the couch also. With her head still down, Cindy is weeping quietly. Joel doesn't notice, looking straight ahead.

JOEL
So what's your deal anyway?... I mean, how did you end up like this?

Joel finally looks over, notices that she's crying. He's caught off guard.

JOEL
...Ah... Cindy?

Cindy breaks down and starts bawling.

JOEL (cont'd)
Okay, now you see... that's what I'm talking about. You're trying to manipulate me now, and I'm not gonna fall for it...

Cindy starts bawling even harder.

JOEL (cont'd)
I really hope you're not faking this right now, because I'm feeling really bad. Are you faking it?

Cindy shakes her head "no."

JOEL
I'm sorry, I was just curious, you know, how a person ends up like... this...

Cindy suddenly starts BAWLING hysterically.

Joel stands there awkwardly, not sure if he should hug her or comfort her in any way.

JOEL
Never mind. I'm sorry...

Joel tentatively puts a comforting arm around her and she leans in to him, crying on his chest.

He puts his other arm around her and she snuggles in even closer. As her crying gradually subsides she snuggles in even more. Finally, she lifts her head and they start kissing. As they get hot and heavy we

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. EXTENDED STAY AMERICA SUITES -- MORNING

Wide shot of the Hotel. It's a beautiful morning.

INT. CINDY'S ROOM - DAY

Joel wakes up, looking more relaxed than we've ever seen him. We PULL OUT to reveal that he's alone in Cindy's bed. He sits up, yawns. He has a big satisfied smile on his face.

JOEL
Cindy?

He looks around, realizes he's alone. Then suddenly looks worried.

JOEL (cont'd)
Oh shit!

He scrambles for his pants, then looks relieved as he realizes his wallet is still there. He sets down the pants, then after a beat, picks them up again, checks inside the wallet and sees there's still cash and credit cards. Then he looks up at the chest of drawers and sees: Mary's purse, Sylvia's wallet, and a watch, placed side by side.

He lies back in bed, and shuts his eyes, grinning again.

INT. REYNOLD'S EXTRACT /MANUFACTURING AREA -- MORNING

Extract bottles moving along the assembly line full steam. Mary and Gabriella gossiping.

MARY
(looks at her watch)
Joel hasn't been in all morning.
can you believe that?

GABRIELLE
If we come in late, we get fired.
And here we're working our tails
off, and he's gonna get rich.

Joel walks in, bright-eyed and cheery, greeting people. He walks over to Mary carrying her PURSE.

JOEL
Here you go Mary.

Joel hands her the purse. Mary looks at it, not quite sure how to react, not ever wanting to appear grateful for anything -- not in her nature.

JOEL (cont'd)
And by the way, Hector didn't take it. Cindy did.

Joel walks off. Mary just shakes her head at him. She whispers to Gabriella.

MARY
Can you believe that? Blaming Cindy just to protect Hector.

INT. JOEL'S OFFICE - DAY

Joel is at his desk. Brian comes in.

BRIAN
Step's here to see you.

JOEL
Really? Bring him in.

BRIAN
No, he's outside. At the loading dock. Wants to talk to you alone back there for some reason.
(crude immitation)
"Man to man."

EXT. REYNOLDS EXTRACT - LOADING DOCK

Step is pacing around, waiting. Joel comes out.

JOEL
Hi Step...

STEP
Hey.

JOEL
How you doin'? How's your, ah...

STEP
(looking down at his crotch)
Oh it's okay. Some days it still hurts, but they've got me on some pills. It's not too bad I guess...

JOEL
Well... that's good.

They both sit down on the edge of the dock.

STEP
Look, ah... Cindy left me.

Joel's nods, not surprised, but sympathetic.

JOEL
Wow... Bummer...

STEP
Yeah, it is a bummer... You know, I thought the worst part was having my balls knocked off, but you know what the worse part is? Dealin' with all this bullshit... I'm sick of that Adler guy tellin' me what to do. He's a real dick.

JOEL
Yeah, he sure is.

STEP
The truth is, I just want to have my old life back -- I just want to go back to work. I'm a workin' man; that's what I do.

JOEL
Yeah... I'm beginning to think I might be the same way... I'm a little worried about what I'd do with too much time on my hands.

STEP
I just lay around and watch TV all day.

JOEL
Yeah,... I think I do a lot worse.

STEP
The problem is, if I bankrupt the company, there won't be a job to go back to.

JOEL
You don't have to bankrupt the company.

STEP
Yeah, but then if I drop the lawsuit, you'll sell the company, and the new company might not hire me.

JOEL
Well, maybe I don't have to sell the company... You know I've been thinking; all these years I've been building this company, dreaming about the day I could sell it and retire, but what would I really do if I retired? It's like that old saying -- it's not about the destination, it's about the journey?

Step just stares at him blankly, he lost him.

JOEL
... I guess what I'm saying is, too much free time might not be such a good thing -- like that old saying, idle hands are the Devil's playground?

Step's never heard that one either.

STEP
I'm sorry, I don't do much book readin'.

JOEL
What I'm saying is, I'm thinking maybe I won't sell the company...

STEP
Really?

JOEL
that is, if you dropped the lawsuit. -- and remember, you'll still get that insurance money -- probably a couple hundred thousand. What do you think?

STEP
Hmm. That sounds fair... But under one condition...

JOEL
What's that?

STEP
You make me floor manager.

JOEL
Deal.

They shake hands.

INT. REYNOLDS EXTRACT - MANUFACTURING AREA

Joel walks in with Step at his side. Addresses the employees.

JOEL
Hold the line!

Mary shuts off the conveyer belt.

JOEL
Okay, listen up everybody.
(Waits for them to settle)
I've decided not to sell the company...

Gasps and murmurs among the employees.

JOEL
And I'm making Step the new Floor Manager.

More gasps and murmurs.

JOEL
And if anyone doesn't like it, I hear they're hiring over at Gemco... But just remember, at Gemco, the owner doesn't know your names; you never even meet him, he's at an office up in Chicago somewhere and you get an auto-response if you try to email him to complain about anything. Here, you can come up to my office any time you have a problem. Thanks.

Joel walks off. Brian catches up with him.

BRIAN
Huh? You're not selling?

JOEL
It's about the journey Brian. The journey.

ANGLE on Mary. She and Gabrielle start right back up.

MARY
You know, if Joel's going to put him in charge, we should go on strike. You know, at Gemco, the union handles the strikes and you don't even have to--

PULL OUT as Step cuts her off.

STEP
Quit yapping and get back to work or you're fired.

Step walks off -- maybe pops a testosterone pill. Mary and Gabrielle keep muttering and shaking their heads.

LONG PULL OUT as things get back to normal at the factory.

INT. CHAPEL - DAY

We are CLOSE ON NATHAN, in a coffin, embalmed. We PULL OUT to see mourners lined up, taking a last look at the body. Joel is among them. He looks down at Nathan for a moment and then continues to his seat. A few rows back, we see SUZIE, sitting by herself, dressed in black.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

Quick shot of Nathan's casket being lowered into the ground as the priest says the last few words.

EXT. CEMETERY - A LITTLE LATER

People hug and console each other. Joel sees Suzie, walks over to her.

JOEL
Hi... You doing okay?

SUZIE
Yeah, I'm okay.

JOEL
I heard you were right there when it happened. That must've been rough.

SUZIE
It was horrible Joel. He came over to ask for that check, and I just...

Suzie breaks down, starts CRYING.

SUZIE (cont'd)
...I just lost it. I started yelling at him. I said horrible things. He had an aneurism and I probably caused it.
(crying uncontrollably)
I think the last thing I said to him was "shut up." Those were the last words he heard.

Joel hugs her, consoling.

JOEL
It's okay, it's not your fault... It's not your fault.

Suzie's crying subsides a little.

SUZIE
It could happen to any of us Joel. Any of us could have an aneurism. We could die at any moment.

JOEL
Yeah, I know... I know... But we probably won't. It'll be alright.

Suzie starts to regain her composure.

They stand there for a beat.

JOEL
You wanna go get something to eat... or something?

Beat. Suzie still sniffling a little.

SUZIE
Yeah, okay. Sure.

They walk off towards the cemetery gates. After a while, Joel hands Suzie a Kleenex.

JOEL
Here...

SUZIE
Thanks.

They walk a little further. Joel looks at the Chapel nearby.

JOEL
Maybe we should've been married in a Church like that one. Instead of the Botanical Gardens.

SUZIE
I thought you liked the Botanical Gardens?

JOEL
Yeah, but... a church just seems more -- I don't know -- official.

SUZIE
You think it would've made a difference?

JOEL
I don't know... So, are we still married?

SUZIE
Well, legally yes.

JOEL
I mean otherwise.

SUZIE
Hmmm... We can talk about it I suppose.

JOEL
Alright.

They walk for a beat.

JOEL
You know, this is really bad, but... Oh never mind.

SUZIE
What?

JOEL
Well, as I was looking down at Nathan there, I was thinking... That's the longest I've ever seen him with his mouth shut.

Suzie LAUGHS in spite of herself.

SUZIE
Joel!

They walk off into the distance as we

FADE OUT.